

**School-Centred Neighbourhoods: An Assessment of Grande Prairie's  
Community Knowledge Campus**

**By**

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A Practicum  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of

**MASTERS OF CITY PLANNING**

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## **Abstract**

Schools have always played an important role in modern society. They are a reflection of local values and changing educational and societal trends. The 21<sup>st</sup> century brings with it a multitude of challenges as we design schools and communities that embrace and engage learners in an era of global communication and unfettered knowledge exchange. This project explores the concept of a school-centred neighbourhood in response to these changes. Through a case study review of Grande Prairie's Community Knowledge Campus, the study looks at the social influences of a multi-use school facility through the use of indicators of social capital, lifelong learning and learning-based community development. Interviews with school and municipal planners as well as facility users are used to explore the intended purpose of the development and to measure the effectiveness of this concept. The study concludes that multi-use school facilities have a measurable impact on the promotion of these social elements and thus contribute to the creation of a school-centred neighbourhood. Six recommendations are presented at the end of this study for use by school and municipal planners. These include: i) central locations and community linkages, ii) efficiencies and flexibility through multi-use school facilities, iii) the promotion of joint-use agreements, iv) coordinated school board capital planning and municipal land use planning, v) establishing a common planning language between schools and municipalities and vi) community planning and neighbourhood design through CKCs.

## **Acknowledgements**

This practicum is dedicated to my mom, dad and brother for being supportive of all my endeavors. You taught me to follow my dreams and be true to myself. Thank you for your unwavering support and boundless encouragement, without which, completion of this thesis would not have been possible.

Thank you to my patient advisor Dr. Richard Milgrom and my committee members Dr. John Wiens and Professor David Linton for being outstanding mentors. Your guidance was indispensable.

Thank you to Edmonton Catholic Schools for providing me with a wealth of hands-on experience in the field of educational and land use planning. It's an honour to be associated with such an outstanding organization.

Finally, I wish to thank the superb academic and support staff at the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Architecture. The knowledge I have gleaned will be with me forever.

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*The best cure for destructive sprawl is to build cities people don't want to abandon, places where they can live healthy, fulfilling lives in densities that don't devour our landscapes, pave our wilderness and pollute our watersheds, air, and wildlife. To achieve this, we need to invest in urban schools, transportation, parks, health care, police protection, and infrastructure that makes cities great magnets with gravity sufficient to draw back the creeping suburbs.*

—Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

Schools have always played an important role in society. As economic, political and social movements transform the way we live and relate to our environment, schools must keep pace with innovation and change. Research indicates that quality schools are a crucial component of quality of cities (McKoy et al., 2005; Springer, 2007). Yet, despite this relationship, municipal planning practices remain largely disconnected from school facility planning. The territoriality of both municipalities and school boards often prevents these agencies from coming together to produce environments that improve student achievement, strengthen the city as a whole and remain viable over the long term. Research demonstrates that school-centred neighbourhoods (SCNs) have the potential to create a culture of learning that has positive impacts on the social, physical and economic goals of a community (McKoy et al., 2005, p. 60). In order to do this, however, school boards and municipalities need to overcome a number of obstacles that prevent cooperative, multi-agency governance from occurring (Vincent, 2006).

One such obstacle is the lack of common goals that guide planning processes. Goals such as promoting lifelong learning, strengthening social capital and contributing to learning-based community development help to create and define SCNs. They need to be a part of

a common lexicon used by planning professionals involved with school and neighbourhood design. But, because schools and municipalities are generally autonomous, they often operate as separate silos.

According to the Building Educational Success Together collaborative (BEST), silo planning and development "...leaves school districts with inadequate public land for growth or with underutilized assets that might be used for other public purposes" (BEST, 2006 p. 4). Beyond simply sharing demographic information and consulting on land use issues, both agencies often fail to consider the role of schools in community.

The BEST is an American collaborative consisting of researchers and policy analysts that focus on improving the quality of school facilities in urban communities. They define the role of schools in community as follows:

Although school districts are usually autonomous bodies, there are significant benefits to planning for and designing school facilities within the larger municipal planning framework with maximum joint planning and/or provisions for shared use. The school building as well as the activities that take place in it and on the school site during and after school hours are important components of community development or redevelopment and can also have an economic impact in the community (BEST, 2006 p. 12).

Schools are most often built reactively to accommodate the pressures of a growing population in the same way fire halls or police stations are built. Yet, their civic importance is often forgotten. Schools have more than one purpose in a community. With a purposeful design, they can adapt to neighbourhood demographic changes over time. By looking at schools as multi-purposed community facilities, new and innovative purposes can be realized.

Schools should be a resource to the community at-large. When school facilities are perceived this way, value is created for the school and for the community, since families can be strengthened and communities can realize added vitality (BEST, 2006 p. 11).

As a focal point, they become an important catalyst for personal and professional growth (DeFlippis, J. 2001; Binger et al., 2003). When placed in well-planned environments, they can influence the physical form and function of a neighbourhood while reflecting local values and culture (Perry et al., 1929; Grant, 1997).

This practicum project explores the impact of one such development in Grande Prairie, Alberta. The Grande Prairie Community Knowledge Campus (GPCKC) serves as a case study to explore the potentially transformative influence on the surrounding neighbourhood of a multi-use school facility. The term “community knowledge campus” (CKC) is used extensively in this practicum. The City of Edmonton (2003) defines the term as:

A structure or group of structures on a site located near the centre of a community. Its primary use is the provision of educational opportunities, along with a range of compatible partner uses, which collectively provide a focal point for the community... (p.47).

A CKC is intended to be the cornerstone of a school-centred neighbourhood and a means by which a neighbourhood addresses values such life long learning, social capital and learning-based community development.

The Grande Prairie Community Knowledge Campus (CKC) was chosen as a case study for two reasons:

1. The project is a result of multi-agency planning with a common goal: to define Grand Prairie's image as a "Learning Society" (Yates et al., 1998, p. 6) and to create a focal point for the benefit of students and the surrounding neighbourhood and;
2. The Grand Prairie CKC is designed to improve education-related partnership opportunities with recreation and business groups. The development currently consists of a Catholic high school, a twin-ice arena, and a gymnastics facility. Construction is underway to develop an aquatics centre and wellness field house.

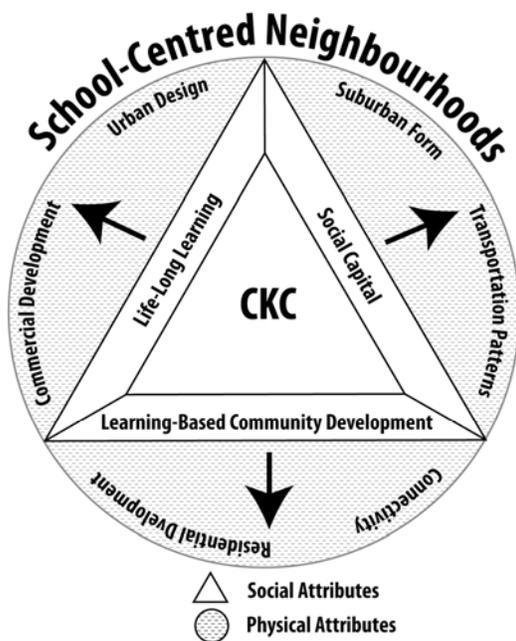


Figure 1. SCN diagram of CKC influences. Source: Rob Tarulli

The goal of this study is to evaluate the impact of this development on the surrounding community. In broad terms, does this development create a SCN? The measure of this impact is a focused evaluation of three factors:

1. The promotion of lifelong learning (see section 3.3.5).
2. The strengthening of social capital (see section 3.3.6).
3. The contribution to learning-based community development (see section 3.3.7).

Conducting this study is an important step towards creating a body of knowledge that could be used to forge successful planning relationships between school boards and municipalities. This study began by looking at the historical role of schools within a community, both as a means of shaping the physical environment and as a response to societal changes. Through interviews with school and municipal planners as well as with facility users, qualitative data was collected about the roles the GPCKC play in addressing each of the three goals listed above. The conclusions that result take into consideration recent educational research, leverage economies of scale and ultimately set a base for creating stronger communities that value learning beyond its formal confines.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

According to BEST and Springer, healthy schools contribute to healthy cities (BEST, 2006; Springer, 2007). Yet, despite this assertion, planning between school boards and municipalities remains largely separate. In many cases, transportation routes, community leagues and recreation centres are often planned before a school site is chosen. If these processes were congruent facilities could be planned to take advantage of the complementary services that each provides. The consequence of the disconnection, though, is that schools become isolated from civic institutions such as recreation centres and social service agencies, leading to a loss or duplication of resources (McKoy et al., 2006). Current research suggests that "...the urban context and built environment have important and under-acknowledged impacts on schools and that school quality, in turn, impacts the local economy" (McKoy et al., 2006 p. 2). Furthermore, development that does not properly consider the school facility can lead to a "...lack of awareness and

understanding of community-based context in which schools exist” (McKoy et al., 2006 p. 2).

Joint use agreements are formal partnerships that allow the use of school facilities by community groups in exchange for the school use of public infrastructure such as swimming pools and ice arenas. A study conducted by the Canada West Foundation found that Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg each employed a joint-use agreement. Although most larger western Canadian cities engage in some form of joint use agreement, a well-researched set of recommendations is needed to further encourage integrated, multi-modal planning that can contribute to neighbourhoods that provide a focal point and access to social, recreational and educational opportunities for a broad range of residents. SCNs develop through a mutual sharing of resources and professional knowledge between both the municipality and school board. Currently, however, neighbourhood planning initiatives have been slow to adopt alternative models for school development and are not often reflective of changes in educational delivery and philosophy.

### **1.3 Statement of Purpose**

The goal of this practicum is to assess the role of the Grande Prairie CKC in establishing a school-centred neighbourhood as measured by indicators of lifelong learning, social capital and learning-based community development. Also of interest is the interagency planning process that enabled the construction of the GPCKC. Qualitative data collected through key informant and facility user interviews was assessed by studying the

responses to a number of questions pertaining to each of the aforementioned themes. The research addressed the following questions:

1. *What is the purpose of a CKC? What did the GPCKC model set out to achieve?*

Clearly identifying the main purpose of a CKC is instrumental in being able to evaluate the application of this model in Grand Prairie. Furthermore, it is important to be able to compare the general intentions of a CKC with the specific objectives of the case study CKC.

2. *How were the purposes of the GPCKC imagined in the initial plans?*

A comprehensive review of the initial planning documents was used to determine what goals and objectives the municipality and school board envisioned for the GPCKC, and whether they changed over time. Interviews with both the user and key informants were used to assess potential differences between user expectations and the proposed purpose put forward by those planning the project.

3. *What is the effectiveness of this concept? Did it achieve the goals that the plan addressed? Does it align with what the literature says?*

This research question aims to establish whether or not a line of evidence can be drawn to support or reject the hypothesis that CKCs create SCNs through their influence on the physical and social aspects of a community.

4. *What recommendations can be made for municipal and school planners about future multi-use school facilities?* Measuring the impact of a multi-use school facility on the surrounding community will help inform planners about the role schools can play in community development and help in the evaluation of other similar projects. In turn, information gathered through this project may help identify areas of commonality and opportunity for collaboration between school and municipal planners.

The GPCKC presents a unique opportunity to study SCNs because of the collaborative nature of this development. Results from this study were used to make recommendations about future multi-use facilities as well as collaborative planning practices between municipalities and school boards.

#### **1.4 Research Directive / Matrix**

This research project systematically analyzes the various components of the study using the main research questions identified above. The following matrix organizes and sorts the data sources according to their relevant research questions. Sub-questions provide a more focused inquiry and indicators help the researcher to ensure that questions are adequately addressed.

Research Questions	Method/Data Source	Sub-Questions	Indicators
What is the generally accepted purpose of a CKC? What does a CKC set out to achieve?	Literature review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do CKCs relate to urban social theory?</li> <li>• To approaches in public education?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature Review Findings</li> <li>• Document Review Findings</li> </ul>
	Document Review		
How was the purpose of the CKC defined in the planning process?	Key informant interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the definition of purpose change during the planning process? In what ways? Why? At what decision points?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do different groups of key informants have the same views? What are the main views?</li> <li>• Was the purpose defined clearly / specifically?</li> <li>• Did this definition change / evolve?</li> <li>• Did the purpose remain at the forefront of planning concerns or was it replaced by other factors?</li> </ul>
	Document review		
	User interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview questions</li> </ul>	
What recommendations can be made about planning future multi-use facilities/CKCs?	Document review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do the findings from the three lines of evidence tell us?</li> <li>• What do they not reveal, or what may require further case studies of other CKCs?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key features of GPCKC facility</li> <li>• Key features of GPCKC location / placement / land-use</li> <li>• Key elements or decisions within the planning process</li> </ul>
	Key informant interviews		
	User interviews/survey		

### 1.5 Biases and Limitations

As a teacher and current employee of a school board, I recognize the potential for bias in inadvertently promoting SCN development models. Because part of this study looks at how respondents have changed in the areas of lifelong learning, social capital and learning-based community development as a result of the GPCKC, respondents may have felt that that they *needed* to demonstrate change. The research questions, however, were designed not to lead the respondent to answer in any one way.

Sample size was also a limitation in that due to time and financial restraints only 12 CKC users and 6 key informants were interviewed. Users were randomly selected by the researcher within the GPCKC common area during two separate occasions and during different times of the day.

Key informant interview were also conducted with municipal and school board planners. Because of their involvement in the project, it was important to ask questions related to inter-agency, cooperative planning as opposed to questions inquiring about the success or failure of the project. As well, this study began with the assumption that SCNs contribute to the overall health of a city.

## **1.6 Significance of Project**

This study may help create linkages between municipalities and school boards. Research suggests that professional interaction between planning and educational disciplines may have positive impacts on urban development:

Different disciplines must educate each other on their respective responsibilities and conceptions of what makes a quality school and what makes for quality cities (Vincent, 2006, p. 436).

Fostering multi-agency partnerships can ensure that new school construction takes advantage of current educational and community development research. Furthermore, The impact of school construction on surrounding land uses is an area that is not well understood (Chung, 2002).

A scan of the current literature indicates a lack of established guiding principles and strategies for multi-agency planning of school facilities. This project contributes to the planning profession by establishing an interface between municipal and school planners. The outcomes that arise from this study can be used to build a body of knowledge that future municipal and school planners can access when jointly constructing new facilities and communities. A set of recommendations based on sound research may help coordinate decisions on land use, housing and transportation that not only support learning but also contribute to healthy communities.

#### *Implications for School Planners*

The results of this study can be used by school planners to help develop capital plans that incorporate partner organizations. By looking at the Grande Prairie example, school boards may be interested in using the data gathered to make a case for or against inter-agency planning initiatives.

#### *Implications for Municipal Planners*

The Grande Prairie Community Knowledge Campus provides an example of how schools might help shape an urban environment. Municipal planners may gain a broader perspective on the role of schools with a community as well as their related physical and social impacts.

### **1.7 Chapter Outlines**

Chapter One, Introduction, provides an overview of the study and how it was conducted. This chapter explains the problem, how it was evaluated and the significance of the

research for the profession at large. Chapter Two, Research Methods, explains the research instruments used in the this study. It also describes the method of data analysis used. Chapter Three, Literature Review, is a comprehensive review and summary of the history of schools within community, followed by an in-depth look into the relationship between school and community. Chapter Four, The Grande Prairie Community Knowledge Campus introduces the reader to the case study and provides detail about GPCKC was planned and developed. Chapter Five, Review of Defining Documents, is a detailed review of the planning documents used by both municipal and school board planners prior to the construction of the GPCKC. Chapter Six, Data Analysis, interprets the data collect by the researcher. Chapter Seven, Conclusions, Recommendations and Directions for Further Study, both summarizes and synthesizes the information obtained through the literature review and interviews. Glossary defines a number of terms used commonly in this study. Works Cited, is an alphabetical categorization of the sources used in this study. Lastly, Appendices includes maps, interview questions and record of ethics approvals.

## 2 Research Method

This study used a number different research tools to gain a clearer understanding of what effect CKCs have on the development of SCNs. The following chart shows which research tools were used during each part of the study.

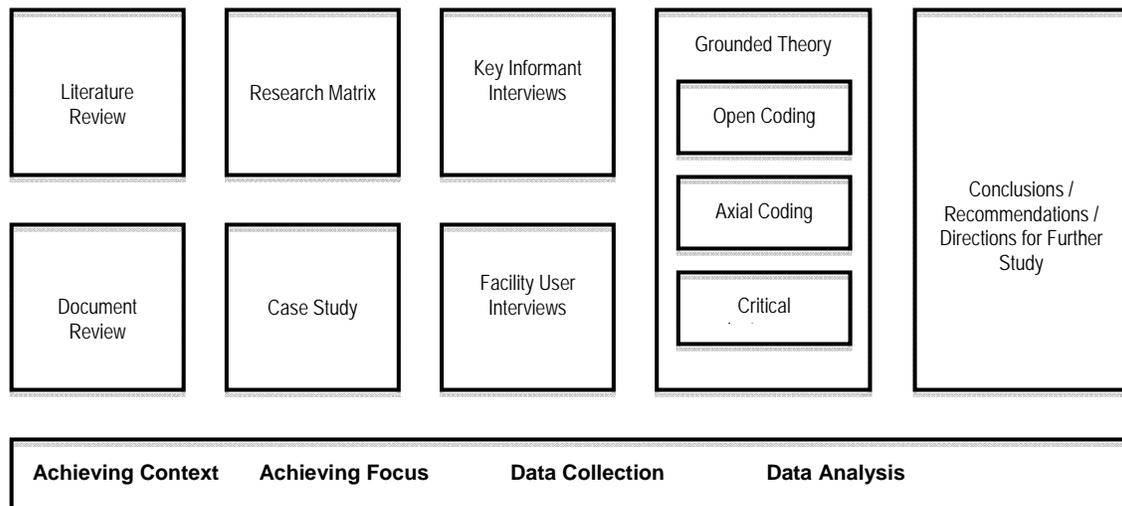


Figure 2. Research Tools used in this study.

### 2.1 Research Tools – Case Studies

This project was conducted using two distinct research strategies: a case study of the GPCKC coupled with a series of key informant and facility user interviews. A literature review helps to situate the study, establish a need for the work and point the way to creating new understanding and perspectives. This enables researchers to develop concise goals that ultimately guide the investigation (Yin, 2009). The objective of the literature review was to establish a base of knowledge about the history and theory of schooling within a community context. It begins by exploring the history of the use of multi-use

schools in Canada and the influence of societal movements on these types of facilities. It also examined important advancements in the field of education that have influenced the way schools have been constructed. The literature review then examines the ideas behind school-centered neighbourhood design, demonstrating the theoretical underpinnings of this concept and the relationships that exist between physical design and social outcomes.

A case study is a common means of uncovering characteristics of social concepts and is a strategy used extensively in psychology, sociology, political science and planning (Yin, 2009 p. 5). In general terms, a case study approach “investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2009 p.18). The decision to focus on single-case study was made because the subject “represents a significant contribution to knowledge and theory building” and can help “refocus future investigations in an entire field” (Yin, 2009 p. 47).

### ***2.1.1 Evaluating Validity in Case Study Research***

Yin (2009) describes four tests for validity in case study research: construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability. Construct validity involves identifying operational measures that are appropriate for the subject being studied. This is accomplished by using multiple sources of evidence, establishing a chain of evidence and having key informants review the draft case study (Yin, 2009 p. 41). For this practicum, evidence gathered through a thorough scan of related literature, as well as data collected

in interviews with various GPCKC users, provided several sources of corroboration and enabled the researcher to establish a defined chain of evidence.

Internal validity is used only for explanatory or causal studies in which the researcher “seeks to establish a causal relationship, whereby certain conditions are believed to lead to other conditions, as distinguished from spurious relationships” (Yin, 2009, p. 40)

External validity deals with determining whether or not findings can be applied to other similar situations. In single-case studies, it is important that the research is not used as a means of implying statistical generalizations. Instead, single-case studies rely on analytical generalizations whereby “the investigator...[strives to] generalize a particular set of results to some broader theory” (Yin, 2009 p. 43). For example, results gathered through the study of the GPCKC can be applied to school centered neighbourhoods in any city or community. Furthermore, the findings of this research may be used by school and municipal planners when evaluating proposals for future developments.

The final test of validity in case study research comes in the form of reliability. This is to say that “when conducting the same case study all over again, the later investigator should arrive at the same finding and conclusions” (Yin, 2009 p. 45). This test of validity requires a high degree of emphasis on documenting procedures, methods of data analysis and biases. Interview data for this practicum will be analyzed using a rigorous coding process known as *grounded theory*. A description of the methodology and practical examples are provided in section Six.

## 2.2 Research Tools - Interviews

Interviews can fall under one of three categories: unstructured, semi-structured and structured. The degree to which the interviewer is able to customize his or her line of questioning during the interview process determines which style is used. Unstructured interviews tend to be most flexible in that the interviewer establishes a broad line of inquiry yet allows the interviewee to guide the discussion (Wilkinson et al., 2003 p. 45). Although flexibility in modifying and adapting a line of questions can have advantages, transcribing and coding the data can be extremely time consuming. As superfluous information is removed, one runs the risk of eliminating potentially valuable coding information (Wilkinson et al., 2003 p. 47). Semi-structured interviews provide a less flexible scope of discussion in that the researcher uses a series of predetermined questions to shape the boundary of the interview. By allowing for a small amount of flexibility in the questions posed, the researcher is able to seek responses that may prove valuable to the study. Structured interviews are often used to ensure that rigid time limits for discussions are met. Similar in many ways to questionnaires, questions are most often closed-ended or involve a response based on degree along a continuum (Wilkinson et al., 2003 p. 53).

For the purpose of this study, interviews were semi-structured using a combination of open- and close-ended questions. Because of the intensive nature of the coding process, interviewees were asked specific questions, in order to limit opportunity for divergences. Closed-ended questions, which asked interviewees to rate their answers along a

continuum, were used to help support responses given to similar open-ended questions. This helped validate the coding process.

### **2.3 Data Analysis – Grounded Theory**

Using a grounded theory approach to analyze interview transcripts, this study attempts to measure changes in the lifelong learning, social capital and learning-based community development of neighbourhood residents since the construction of the GPCKC. Grounded theory is an appropriate research vehicle because it is used a discovery tool. This is to say that the method is emergent as opposed to strictly being hypothesis testing and is often used to gain a “better understanding of a complex process” (Glaser et al., 1967, p. 67). The method is described by Glasser and Strauss (1967) as “a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon” (p.12).

#### **2.3.1 Coding Procedure**

A total of twelve user interviews and six key informant interviews were included in the study using a core group of questions common to all. Interviews lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and were recorded using a digital audio device. The recordings were used in addition to written notes in order to ensure that the coding process was accurate.

Coding took place in three stages:

1. **Critical Instances** – This stage involved highlighting key passages in the transcript excluding digressions and irrelevant material (Strauss, 1990). This is somewhat subjective as the researcher chooses passages they believed are relevant to the

- study. This approach is most often used in unstructured interviews where researchers are seeking to find broad themes at the early stages of their investigations. In this study, the use of predefined questions generally precluded the need to scan for critical instances. Interview questions for this project were organized according to themes that were identified in the literature review (i.e. lifelong learning, social capital and learning-based community development).
2. Open Coding – This was the process of assigning the critical instances to specific categories (Strauss et al., 1990). Essentially, the process sorted instances into the theme categories as identified during selective coding.
  3. Axial Coding – After completing the open coding, instances were categorized according to theme. Axial coding involved refining these instances by deleting or combining common categories as well as looking for relationships between categories (Strauss, 1990).

For example, the interviewer may have asked users of the GPCKC what they consider to be the most important part of the facility. The interviewee might have answered with the following statement:

The CKC is a point of pride for Grande Prairie. Before, I had to drive across town. Now I can walk or take the bus to get there but I think that best part of the CKC is that I can take skating lessons at the ice arena while catching up with some of the other moms after I drop my daughter off at school.

The response contains a number of important data elements or “critical instances” that can be categorized into the predetermined themes. The goal is to identify key characterizations that point to the broader themes identified in the literature review.

Because this study looks at lifelong learning, social capital and learning-based community development, the analysis may begin by looking for words or phrases that can

be associated with these themes. “Skating lessons” would be identified as an indicator of lifelong learning while “catching up with some of the other moms” would be categorized under social capital.

Critical instances were further analyzed during axial coding. This was done to identify relationships between categories. In the above example, the researcher may look for evidence of change as a result of the CKC. Phrases such as “before I had to drive” would be categorized as pre-construction behaviour (PreCB) while “now I can walk to take the bus” would point to post-construction behavior (PostCB).

### **3 Literature Review**

#### **3.1 The Evolution of Multi-Use School Facilities in Canada**

##### ***3.1.1 Introduction***

This section explores the relationship between schools and community. First it examines the emergence of formal education in Canada. It traces how formal education responded to the country's transition from an agrarian to an industrial society. Later, the social conditions of the Depression era brought about a unique means of community development by way of a "community school" model. The history and influence of this model are discussed in the third part of this review. The section then discusses the emergence of joint use agreements as a means of creating partnerships that contribute to school-centred neighbourhoods. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, joint use agreements are becoming more common. In light of this, the fourth part of this section examines the role of education in post-industrial society. The final part of this section concludes with a look at a number of alternative facility arrangements that manifest current educational research.

##### ***3.1.2 The Early Years of Canadian Schooling***

In order to understand the relationship between schools and communities, one needs to examine the context in which Canadian schooling emerged. Prior to 1867, schooling in British North America was fragmented, ad hoc and often informal depending on the particular region. Formal education was a luxury reserved for those who could afford to send their children to denominational schools in their area. Early French settlers had begun organizing networks of "petite écoles" as early as 1627. For the most part,

schooling took place in one-room schoolhouses run by Ursuline nuns (Axelrod, 1997, p. 22). At this time, the schoolhouse also served as a chapel and a community meeting hall. Up until the Conquest of 1759, schooling during the French Regime had made significant strides. Religious education within the *petite écoles* had provided students with basic reading and writing skills; abilities that English speaking settlers often lacked (Axelrod, 1997). During the period after the Conquest, the British Crown moved rapidly to increase immigration into British North America in an effort to strengthen its cultural control over the region. In this effort, schools were recognized as having an important role in passing along cultural and religious ideologies that fostered a sense of nationalism and community belonging. Construction of schools in this period depended on funding from denominational groups, private donors and to a lesser degree state support (Axelrod, 1997, p. 30). Shared financial support meant that stakeholders had a strong influence on how the school would be used and what would be taught. In a rural context, the timetable revolved around seasonal farming practices. Time was allowed for morning farm chores and harvesting rotations. In the evenings, the schoolhouse was often used as a meeting hall or celebration venue.

During the 1840s, mass public schooling became an important agenda item for both confederate supporters and the ‘rebel’ opposition<sup>2</sup> Confederate supporters, saw schools as having “a key role to play in ensuring political stability in a period of profound social change (Axelrod, 1997 p. 25). Colonial leaders, bearing witness to frequent uprisings by

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<sup>2</sup> Prominent rebels included William Lyon Mackenzie and Louis-Joesph Papineau. Both felt that ordinary citizens had the right to an “enlightened education.”

the reformist movement, saw public education as a means of suppressing rebellion and cultivating a “sense of citizenship, loyalty, respect for property and deference to authority” (Axelrod, 1997, p. 25). The rebel opposition “saw extended schooling as an important instrument of democratization” and a means of making ordinary citizens aware of arbitrary rule by non-elected authorities (Axelrod, 1997, p. 25).

### **3.2 Schooling and Industrialization**

As Canada’s population became larger and more urbanized, the focus of schooling needed to evolve to meet the demand of a society in transition. Industrialization between 1850 and 1930 meant that rural models of education were no longer providing the skills necessary for youth seeking work in factory environments. As well, the dictates of those funding school construction did not always match the political ideology of the time. Influenced by the ‘efficiencies’ of the industrial movement in the United States and Europe, political leaders in Canada began searching for ways of correcting the social conditions that were causing “racial riots, highly visible poverty and dramatic confrontations between capital and labour” (Wilson, 1980, p. 23). In order to restructure the public school system, “industrial reorganization served as a model for social reorganization” (Wilson et al. 1980, p.24). Political leaders sought to streamline federal responsibilities by implementing a system of provincial control. With the signing of the Constitution Act in 1867, provinces were assigned responsibility for all matters relating to public education. This gave provinces authority over school funding, construction and curricular content. At the same time, schools moved from being multi-use community-gathering venues to single function buildings. According to Contenta (1993), schools came to “reflect the hierarchical nature of workplaces, and were built, organized and run

like factories” (Contenta, 1993, p. 16). Lackney further highlights this tendency by stating that “...the overt curriculum of reading, writing, arithmetic and history was overlaid on a covert curriculum of punctuality, obedience, rote and repetitive work” (Lackney et al., 1999, p.6). Indeed, during the early part of the twentieth century, school architecture was even reflective of factory design. For example, Brant Street Public School in Toronto was constructed to enable conversion to a factory if enrolment declined (Contenta, 1993, p. 16). Rows of classrooms along either side of a long hallway became known as an “egg crate” design and were characteristic of schools up until the late 1950’s (Lackney et al., 1999). The industrial era also marked a trend toward large

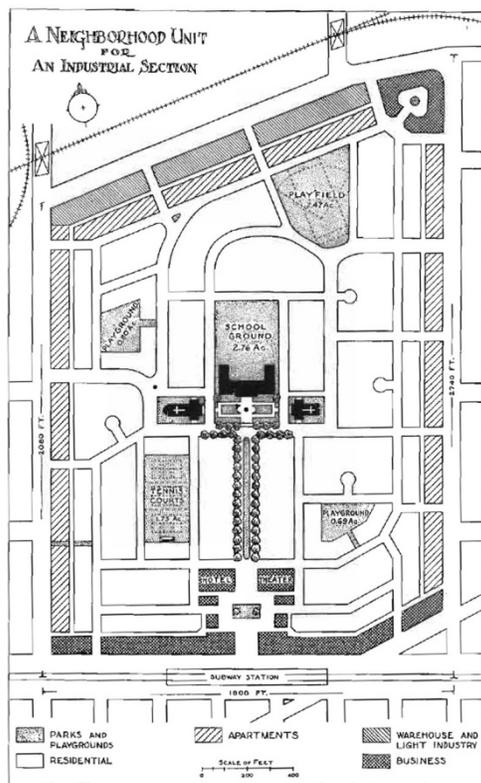


Figure 3. Clarence Perry’s Neighbourhood Unit Concept for an industrial area in Chicago. Source: Perry 1929, p. 88

schools and separate community facilities. In urban areas, many of these large schools began to suffer from attendance issues, crime and inability to attract and retain qualified staff. In low-income areas, the problem was often magnified due to high levels of unemployment and squalid living conditions (Contenta, 1993, p. 18).

### 3.2.1 *The Neighbourhood Unit and Community Schools Model*

By the 1930s, inner-city neighbourhoods in industrial cities were rapidly deteriorating. The Great Depression brought about high levels of

unemployment and subsequent poverty. Densely populated “worker villages” in the centre of many cities were plagued with illness and suffered from poor air quality. Planning initiatives at the time began exploring the idea of a suburban “neighbourhood unit” that would serve to disperse the working class. Clarence Perry, the originator of this concept, attempted to give form to the ideals of social reformers by creating “superblocks” of large open space, pedestrian walkways, fostering “community life [centered] around the neighborhood school” (Silver, 1985, p. 165). Perry’s concept of a neighbourhood sought to create “a meaningful social unit, constructed through interactions between members” (Grant 1997, p. 116).

In response to the change in demographics and the economic order of the time, a new school model began to emerge in 1935. The evolution of the ‘community school’ began in Flint, Michigan as a means of providing disadvantaged groups with recreational activities during school off-hours (Decker, 1999, p.18). Originated by Frank Manley, the community school model sought to serve the needs of all community members. Manley saw schools as being underutilized community assets managed by society’s best educated. His vision was to open the school to those who owned it. He believed that schools should “function to strengthen and define the community as it did in the rural setting” (Vanderhoef, 1978, p.17). Education was to be adaptive and relevant to the context and in which it exists; a concept echoed by Freire in his seminal work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1971). Friere believed that students learned best from experiences and interactions within their own community. Local knowledge was to be the basis for socio-political change (Friere, 1971)

The U.S. involvement in during the Second World War brought about the need for skilled workmen to build war machinery. By 1942, the General Motors factory in Flint was converted into a military vehicle production facility. With the financial assistance of General Motors founder C.S. Mott, Manley began organizing welding workshops in school classrooms for out of work labourers. Eventually, more programs were added to include health clinics and social work agencies (Vanderhoef, 1978).

Marty Blank (2005), director of the Coalition for Community Schools, identifies two branches of the modern community school movement. The first builds on “a strong partnership between a school and an anchor institution that also has roots in the neighbourhood” (Blank, 2005). Examples of this might include partnerships between school boards and post-secondary institutions, YMCAs or health departments.

The second model has its roots in a neighbourhood regeneration strategy. By surveying the community, school administrators create programs based on issues that they identify. In addition to regular schooling, access to child-care, health services, addictions counseling, and employment assistance are examples of the range of resources that might be offered in this type of arrangement. The main objective of this model is to trigger a progressive revitalization with in the neighbourhood (Crowther et al., 2003, p. 23).

The popularity of this model eventually spread throughout the United States and into Canada. The late arrival of the community school movement in Canada began on Prince

Edward Island in the early 1960s. After the Second World War, farming communities in the region began experiencing an economic recession (Institute of Island Studies, 1998). The price of farmed goods fell in response to industrial farming practices in other parts of the country forcing many farmers to seek other forms of livelihood. The community school movement was a direct response to the conditions of the time. Adult education classes and social development programs became an integral part of the rural school system (Institute of Island Studies, 1998).

### ***3.2.2 The Emergence of Joint-Use Agreements***

Joint use agreements are formal partnerships, which enable the sharing of existing facilities and resources amongst school boards, municipalities and community organizations. They also serve to guide the planning, assembling, designing and maintenance of future facility construction (Ringers, 1996 p. 6). Stemming from “smart-growth” principles (see section 3.3.3 below) such as encouraging mixed land uses, compact building design and promoting walkable communities, joint-use agreements seek to create well-planned community focal points that tap into an increasing interest in lifelong learning and community involvement. Collaboration between stakeholders involved in school planning can result in facilities that are accessible by greenways, and public transit (Ringers, 1996 p. 8).

Agreements between stakeholders may range from the after school use of sports fields and gymnasium rentals to facilities that do not “differentiate between school hours and public hours because the entire building is operated for the benefit of all ages...and operated by educational and other public service agencies” (Molloy, 1973, p. 231).

Joint-use agreements are becoming increasingly popular in urban areas mainly because they provide cost sharing advantages. Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario actively encourage school boards to enter into such agreements and are in the process of making legislative amendments to allow for private-public partnerships (P3's) on municipal reserve land (Alberta Education, 2007). For existing facilities, a shared cost arrangement between stakeholders and the Provincial government opens up opportunities to create pockets of educational redevelopment to help enhance the surrounding urban fabric. An example of this is the Shawnessy YMCA in Calgary. This partnership agreement led to the construction of twin ice arenas, a Catholic high school, public library, community gymnasium and a public education space.

In Grande Prairie, the construction of a Community Knowledge Campus (CKC) brought together a wide range of interested partners including: GP Catholic Schools, GP Public Schools, Peace Wapiti School Board, GP Public Library Board, Regional College, Regional Health Authority, Government of Canada, Alberta Provincial Government, and a number of private sector companies (food vendors, daycare, etc.). Joint-use agreements that enable a collaboration of this size require planning departments to work closely with partnering agencies and yield unique school centered neighbourhoods.

### ***3.2.3 The Role of Education in Post-Industrial Society***

A responsive system of education is reflective of societal needs and adaptable to the conditions in which it exists. In today's post-industrial society, schooling needs to take on a role that extends beyond the traditional model of isolated learning. Simon (1992) states

that the current school model of “reductionist economic determinism...[wherein] the primary function of schools is to support existing forms of social and economic relations” (Simon, 1992, p.121), no longer serves the needs of a society faced with the challenges and complications of remaining competitive in an increasingly globalized world. Simon argues that schools have an obligation to ensure that what is being taught is applicable to the current economic, social and culture conditions of the time (Simon, 1992, p.123). Tightly tethered to this notion is the realization that the curriculum is only part of a larger puzzle. The way school fits into the community greatly influences students’ attitude toward learning. Similarly, Moore and Lackney (1994) note that learning is no longer a passive act that takes place in an isolated environment. They suggest that learning needs to be interactive, exploratory and contextual. Consequently, the planning of modern educational facilities must give form to these new social realities (Moore and Lackney, 1994, p. 21). The following section explores how these concepts may be manifested through alternative models of facility design.

### ***3.2.4 Alternative Multi-Use Facility Concepts***

#### ***3.2.4.1 Interactive Learning***

Educational theorists from John Dewey (1952) to Paulo Friere (1971) advocate that the best approach to learning is one that is non-linear. Referred to as “constructivism”, this approach encourages students to form an understanding of curricular material through a series of facilitated activities. Those who take this position argue that students learn not only from their teacher, text resources and experimentation but also from each other and interactions with those within their community. They see the role of the teacher as a facilitator of knowledge, similar to the Socratic teaching method.

*Manifestation:*

One measure of a successful 21<sup>st</sup> century school is its influence on the surrounding community (Brubaker, 1999, p. 16). Building on the community school model, a facility incorporating interactive learning might provide opportunity for social interaction by encouraging community involvement. The school may share space with social services and cultural groups. This concept is not limited to new school construction as demonstrated by the “Village at Indian Hill” Educational Mall in Pomona, California. Faced with a surge in student enrollment, the Pomona Unified School District devised a strategy to convert a run-down shopping mall into an educational village (Spector, 2003, p. 4). Situated on a sixty-six acre plot of land in an established area, the District produced an “Invitation to Partnership”. By 2001, the project had attracted a variety of commercial and non-profit enterprises as well as innovative government and high tech organizations. These included the Los Angeles County Office of Education, AT&T and NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory (Spector, 2003, p. 6). Middle and high school students are provided with an opportunity to interact and work along with partnering organizations in the Educational Village. In turn, partners and students become accustomed to working in the same environment.

*3.2.4.2 Exploratory Learning*

Just as the internet has transformed the traditional relationship between media producer and consumer, so too has the relationship between teacher and learner been transformed. Technology has enabled learners to seek out information and resources that, in previous times, were available only to a select few. Digital libraries, electronic books, synchronous and asynchronous communication have all empowered learners and teachers alike. In

secondary and post-secondary environments this often puts teachers and learners on equal footing with regard to information. With hundreds of terabytes of accessible information, learning is greatly dependent on the ability to accurately and *actively* seek out relevant information.

*Manifestation:*

In the fall of 2000, Clovis and Fresno Unified School Districts entered into a joint-use agreement to construct the Center for Advanced Research and Technology (CART). This 75,000 square foot facility was created to link high school students with community groups and businesses that required industry standard technical work or research to be performed. Students work in an exploratory work environment that enables them seek out relevant assistance from co-operating research and development corporations such as Sun Microsystems and Dell and Microsoft (Spector, 2003, p. 6).

*3.2.4.3 Contextual Learning*

Demonstrating an abstract concept in a familiar context is certainly not a new pedagogical paradigm (Springer, 2007; Strickland 2001). However, when the when the neighbourhood becomes a place of learning, and the school becomes and integral part of the neighbourhood, the idea of contextual learning takes on new meaning. This type of learning can be as simple as “greening” a school ground to enable students [and neighbourhood residents?] to observe the natural processes around them. On a larger scale, municipalities can contribute to contextual learning by identifying areas of natural or historical importance (Springer, 2007). Co-operation between school boards and municipal public works departments can create glass sidewalk sections that allow pedestrians to see the network of water infrastructure. According to Gardner (2006),

when learning is accomplished in context, knowledge becomes internalized and meaningful (Gardner, 2006, p. 68).

*Manifestation:*

Roy Strickland's City of Learning revitalization model is a "strategy for combining school, urban design and development" (Strickland, 2001 p. 8). Through coordinated planning, historic preservation and community design charrettes, Strickland's model envisions entire neighbourhoods becoming campuses. Educational space is planned into a variety of buildings and lessons are demonstrated through the use of local resources. The model has been used in Paterson, New Jersey where blocks of formerly vacant commercial space have been converted into a downtown campus. Funds that would have been allocated for the construction of suburban schools are spent on transforming urban decay into contextual learning environments that benefit all member of the community.

**3.2.5 Conclusion**

School and community have been demonstrated to have close historical ties. Changes in societal trends often influence the way education is provided. Although institutional change is sometimes slow to be implemented, innovative planning practices continue to influence schooling models. This continual interaction between society and schooling is an important measure of healthy, dynamic communities. Likewise, as the role of schooling evolves, the design of communities around these facilities will begin to take on qualities that are reflective of the processes taking place within the school.

Neighbourhood revitalization, resource sharing, and continual learning are all examples of the positive influences which pioneering school models have had on their surrounding urban fabric.

### **3.3 School-Centred Neighbourhoods: The Physical and Social Nexus**

#### ***3.3.1 Introduction***

This chapter aims to establish a reference point to begin the study of how school-centred neighbourhoods may foster a community learning strategy that contributes to community development. Because different authors often interpret many of the terms used in this study differently, this section establishes a series of definitions based on the review of scholarly literature. Beginning with the notion of school-centred neighbourhood design, this review will explore the influence of Clarence Perry's "neighbourhood unit" model and its impact on the promotion of key concepts inherent to a "learning community". These concepts include a commitment to lifelong learning, social capital and learning-based community development.

Research suggests that the confluence of planning initiatives, school reform movements and community building models is an important step in creating communities that leverage their opportunities and assets against the many challenges faced by growing urban environments (Vincent, 2006, Blank, 2005). International organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 1996) have played a leading role in the development of research material dealing with community in a knowledge-based society. The final part of this section will look at the role of lifelong learning and social capital as a mechanism for community development.

### ***3.3.2 School-centred Neighbourhoods***

School-centred neighbourhoods (SCN) create a focal point for the community by placing schools in areas easily accessible by multiple modes of transportation (BEST, 2006).

Schools become important community nodes and move beyond their traditional purpose; extending services to a greater audience outside of normal teaching hours (McKoy et al., 2006). Those who live and work in SCNs tend to places value on lifelong learning and community development (Springer, 2007). They strive to build on the existing social capital through voluntary associations and social networks (Stanton-Salazar, 1997).

Although schools and their roles in society are rooted deeply in place, the school-centred neighbourhood concept emphasizes the relationship between the physical and social environment. As Vincent (2006) argues, “schools are a unique kind of infrastructure—both physical and social” (p. 435). As such, planning neighbourhoods of this type involves diverse stakeholder input and a wider scope of consideration. Well-planned SCNs can be complex because they “fall at the intersection of sometimes-distinct aspects of planning: school planning, transportation planning and land development planning” (Steiner et al., 2006 p. 19).

The SCN concept draws from Clarence Perry’s (1929) Neighbourhood Unit Model, which pays particular attention to the routines and functions of suburban family life. In order to facilitate these routines, a “unit” generally consists of an elementary school,

small parks and playgrounds, local shops and a well-defined residential environment.<sup>3</sup> Recognizing that the automobile was an inevitable part of urban life, Perry designed neighbourhoods that directed traffic along perimeter arterials. This enabled low-traffic internal street systems that discouraged through-traffic and promoted walking, and construction of large tracts of open spaces. Like the contemporary SCN, the neighbourhood unit viewed schools as the “neighborhood capital...deserving a dignified site” (Perry, 1929, p.17). Schools of between 800 to 1,500 students were recommended to have a minimum of five acres of open play area. Perry’s concept differs from a SCN in its social purpose:

The neighbourhood unit sought to insulate affluent city residents from the disruptive influence of forced interaction with those of supposedly incompatible social groups (Silver, 1985, p. 166).

Perry viewed the social diversity of large metropolitan centres as detrimental to civic involvement and strived to maintain a social homogeneity through divisive neighborhood planning (Silver, 1985). In stark contrast, SCNs place value on social diversity. They work together with community builders to engage residents of all classes in the improvement of their social condition and built environment. Where as the neighbourhood unit was a top down attempt at social engineering through physical planning, the SCN model uses social and human capital to optimize the use of exiting physical resources and influence the direction of future development patterns.

New research in the area of land use planning in relation to school siting is conspicuously limited. Despite new trends in school architecture that incorporate educational research

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<sup>3</sup> The term “residential environment” includes “the quality of architecture, the layout of the streets, the planting along curbs and in yards, the arrangement and set-back of buildings, and the relation of shops, filling stations, and other commercial institutions to dwelling places - all the elements which go into a home and constitute its external atmosphere” (Perry, 1929, pg. 34)

(for example Kennedy, 2001), little is written about development patterns in relation to increased student achievement, community vitality, and support healthy urban environments (Chung 2002, p.28). McKoy et al. (2005) points out that there is a problematic disconnection between cities and public education:

This disconnect is prevalent in the research, policy, and practice as if the goals of the two sectors were unrelated, when in fact they are intricately intertwined (McKoy et al., 2005 p. 58).

Some authors have suggested that there is a need for further research in the field of school site planning as it pertains to land use patterns and SCNs. For example:

- What impact does a SCN have on land development patterns? With so many connections to the built environment, decisions affecting the placement of schools within a community needs to explore how transportation patterns (i.e. the routes and modes used to get children to school), housing policy (i.e. exclusionary zoning and social mixing), and local governance models can work together to build communities that incorporate current research and best practices from both educational planning and land planning (Katz, 2004 p. 17).
  
- What roles do schools have in promoting outward (suburban) growth? As inner city schools become run-down and under funded, middle-class families move to the suburbs seeking out better schools. Inner-city neighbourhoods, in turn, become areas of concentrated poverty. In the US, smart growth researchers have begun taking a closer look at this issue by identifying local and state policies that have impacts on SCNs. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in cooperation with the Council of Educational Facility Planners International

(CEFPI) have put together an inter-agency planning guide that provides guidance to communities looking to adhere to smart growth directives (CEFPI, 2004 p. 18). Although this is a positive first step in addressing the impact of school construction on land use patterns, it fails to provide guidance in improving the conditions that allow for the degradation of urban schools through poverty and racial segregation (Baum, 2004).

### ***3.3.3 School Planning and Smart Growth***

In recent years, municipalities have begun looking toward smart growth initiatives as a means of militating against sprawl. Teaming with school planners, municipalities can establish design guidelines and development procedures that take into account smart growth principles. The CEFPI (2004) identifies ten such principles that can be included as part of a comprehensive facility master plan:

- *Mixed Land Uses*

A mix of land uses within a neighbourhood promotes local activity. People are able to gain access to commercial districts, offices and schools without the need to drive. This also encourages social interaction leading to a stronger sense of community (CEFPI, 2004 p. 9).

- *Compact Building Design*

Planning communities that occupy smaller land areas can reduce the cost of extending infrastructure. Aside from encouraging a variety of transportation options, compact building design also enable cost sharing amongst stakeholders. Multi-use facilities are one way that schools and municipalities can adopt this principle (CEFPI, 2004 p. 9).

- *Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices*

By encouraging developers to include a variety of housing options around a school site, municipalities can ensure that neighbourhoods are socially and economically diverse. The land use patterns surrounding public infrastructure influences a number of different areas from energy consumption to public transit accessibility (CEFPI, 2004 p. 9).

- *Walkable Neighbourhoods*

Creating communities that encourage walking and biking makes a neighbourhood more accessible to students, seniors, the disabled and those who choose not to drive. A facility master plan should include careful consideration of the pedestrian environment including connections to pathways, parks and traffic crossings (CEFPI, 2004 p.9).

- *Place-based Distinctive, Attractive Neighbourhoods*

The aim of planning smart growth neighborhoods is to create places that reflect the values and culture of a region and its population. Because schools help define those values, their place in a neighborhood should demonstrate its importance. By partnering with other community agencies, new school sites can become an important social node (CEFPI, 2004 p. 10).

- *Preservation of Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Sensitive Areas*

Where possible, new school sites should enhance the existed landscape by incorporating natural and preserving features. Schools should also foster environmental stewardship by providing an example of low impact design and development (CEFPI, 2004 p. 10).

- *Development in Existing Neighbourhoods*

Redeveloping existing school sites as centres of community can result in cost saving and benefit to deteriorating neighbourhoods. Reinvesting in schools to maximize their public use and value can save resources and finances that may otherwise be spent on duplicate services (CEFPI, 2004 p. 10).

- *Varied Transportation Options*

Coordinating the construction of a school with public transportation services ensures that those without a car have a viable means of getting their children to school. This also impacts traffic congestion and air pollution (CEFPI, 2004 p. 10).

- *Predictable, fair and cost-effective development decisions*

This principle implies a relationship between stakeholders, governments and school boards. Municipalities can support smart growth development by providing funding or tax incentives to developers. Likewise, school boards can

invite planners, developers and community groups to be a part of future school planning (CEFPI, 2004 p. 10).

- *Community and Stakeholder Collaboration*

When stakeholders are engaged in the planning process, the needs of a community become a key consideration of any new development initiative.

Involving a wide range of stakeholders is also important in making sure that new development is reflective of a community's visions and goals (CEFPI, 2004 p. 10).

The facility response to smart growth initiatives has been widely varied. A “small schools” movement is currently taking place in some American centres as researchers point to a correlation between smaller schools and improved student achievement (Gottfredson, 1985; Cotton 1996; Lawrence, 2002). Other innovative school construction projects involve expanding schools to include nontraditional settings (Strickland, 2001) “such as museums, shopping malls and zoos” (Bingler et al., 2003 p. 3). Multi-use schools involving community agency partnerships are another smart growth trend taking advantage of economies of scale.

Understanding how school planning and land use planning affect each other also provides insight into the social dynamics that contribute to community development. For example, a neighbourhood in which the school is linked to the local routines and functions of a community has the potential to nurture a “culture of learning” which, in turn, has impacts

on community capacity (Bingler et al., 2003 p. 8). The term “learning community” is often used to describe this type of arrangement.

### ***3.3.4 Learning Communities***

“Learning community” is defined differently in North America and Europe. Typically, the North American definition is concerned with cohort learning groups within an organization that share knowledge to arrive at a clearer understanding of a given topic<sup>4</sup>. In contrast, European definitions relate to regional strategies that combine learning with community capacity building. For the purpose of this study, a learning community is one rooted in place; it focuses on a geographical location; either a neighbourhood, city, or region. The European Lifelong Learning Initiative describes a learning community as:

...a town or region which goes beyond its statutory duty to provide education and training for those who require it and instead, creates a vibrant, participative, culturally aware and economically buoyant human environment through the provision, justification and active promotion of learning opportunities to enhance the potential of all its citizens (Longworth, 1999 p. 112).

According to Bingler et al. (2003), in order to reach this desired outcome, provincial governments, municipalities and school boards need to work together with citizen groups to create communities that address a broad range of educational needs (Bingler et al., 2003). At a municipal level, Bingler et al. (2003) suggests that the ideals of civic participation, cultural awareness, continual or “lifelong learning” need to be a part of a common lexicon. For example, high level planning documents such as a City’s vision statement and municipal development plan should recognize these key concepts and use them to underpin the development and implementation of a City’s strategic plan.

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<sup>4</sup> “Any one of a variety of curricular structures that link together several existing courses or actually restructure the material entirely so that students have opportunities for deeper understanding and integration of the material they are learning, and more interaction with one another and their teachers as fellow participants in the learning enterprise” (Gabelnick, F., MacGregor, J., Matthews, R.S., and Smith, B.L., (eds). *Learning Communities: Creating Connections Among Students, Faculty, and Disciplines*. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, no. 41. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1990).

Furthermore, by incorporating educational research into the planning and design process, schools can transition from being an entity within the community to being one, which encompasses and embraces the community and its resources. The National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities (Bingler et al., 2003) notes that “students achieve better in environments where lifelong learning is a community value, where everyone is a learner, and where school is central to the life and learning of the community, accessible beyond traditional school hours” (Bingler et al., 2003 p. 3).

The social impacts that SCNs have on their surrounding environment have been researched far more extensively than the physical impacts. Studies such as “Making the Difference: Research and Practice in Community Schools” (Blank et al. 2003) identify areas that are directly influenced by neighbourhoods that strive to breakdown the barriers between school and community. The study notes improvement in the following areas:

- Educational Outcomes: Preliminary research into academic achievement of students attending community schools, show that student learning improves. The Coalition for Community Schools suggest that this is because learning in a SCN encompasses the whole student including academics, family and social relations (i.e. social capital) (Blank et al. 2003, p. 40).
- School Usage: Schools are used more effectively as parents and community members start using the facility outside of regular working

hours (i.e. attending seminars, evening classes, working out at the gym etc.) (Blank et al. 2003. p. 41).

- **Family Engagement:** As parents establish closer relationships with teachers and administrators through increased use of the school, they become active partners in their children's education. This increases communication between family members and positively impacts family stability (Blank et al. 2003, p. 42).
- **Community Vitality:** When parents have tighter connections with the school, its role within the community becomes more important. The school becomes a place to get informed about community events, skills training and local initiatives (Blank et al. 2003, p. 43).

International bodies such as UNESCO the OECD have also been involved in studying the social impacts of learning communities. Both agencies see important roles for learning communities as a means of community development (OECD, 1996). The focus of these agencies is on establishing lifelong learning opportunities that enable citizens to build on and share their skills and experiences. The following section details the emergence of lifelong learning as a goal for agencies involved in community betterment.

### ***3.3.5 Lifelong Learning***

The term “lifelong learning” first emerged in a UNESCO document entitled “Learning to Be” (Faure, 1972). This report, published by the International Commission on the Development of Education, called for a fundamental shift in the way that education was

delivered and conceptualized. Faure (1972) saw traditional education to be intrinsically inequitable and believed that pedagogy “reflected a notion of continuing education rather than initial training” (p.17). He argued that the role of greater society was to develop individual’s “whole being” by expanding the provision of education to include non-formal learning - “the learning acquired by an individual as they simultaneously play roles as family and community members, workers, and members of a variety of groups and organizations” (Faris, 2000 p. 97). To meet the challenges of a rapidly changing society, influenced by technological advancements and a growing social division, Faure suggested that governments work to promote lifelong learning through all agencies and departments. UNESCO continues to use Faure’s concept as a strategic initiative and guiding principle within all documents relating to community development. In 1996, it published *Learning: The Treasure Within* (Delors et al., 1996), which identified lifelong learning as central pillar of community development:

...the Commission believes that valid responses to the problems of mismatch between supply and demand on the labour market can come from a more flexible system that allows greater curricular diversity and builds bridges between different types of education, or between working life and further training...it seems to us that the concept of an education pursued throughout life, with all its advantages in terms of flexibility, diversity and availability at different times and in different places, should command wide support. There is a need to rethink and broaden the notion of lifelong education. Not only must it adapt to changes in the nature of work, but it must also constitute a continuous process of forming whole human beings - their knowledge and aptitudes, as well as the critical faculty and the ability to act. It should enable people to develop awareness of themselves and their environment and encourage them to play their social role at work and in the community (Delors et al., 1996, p. 5).

Delors stresses the importance of lifelong learning as an agent of change within society. In addition to bettering the individual, Delors suggests that it has the potential to bring

about a greater awareness of the context that surrounds and influences community development (1996).

The OECD has also been influential in establishing a mandate that includes lifelong learning as part of its Center for Educational Research and Innovation. A number of publications put out by the organization reference lifelong learning as a crucial directive for an emerging knowledge based economy. The OECD published a report entitled *Cities and Regions in the New Learning Economy* (2001), which examined the relationship between learning and economic growth at a local level. The report affirms the belief that when regions adopt a “learning city” (i.e. a learning community) approach to economic development, they tend to outperform those that do not place value on a widely integrated lifelong learning strategy. Policies that encourage continued learning are also seen as a means of bridging the divide between those who typically fare well in knowledge-based economies (i.e. graduates of traditional learning environments) and those who do not (i.e. under skilled laborers). For example, Johnston (1998) states:

There are irresistible social arguments in favour of promoting education beyond traditional schooling and throughout adult life. The distribution of learning opportunities is already quite uneven and the polarization between the knowledge 'haves' and 'have-nots' poses a new and pressing political challenge (Johnston, 1998 p. 2).

The challenge referred to by Johnston is one faced by many governments looking to ensure that learning and personal growth opportunities are available to all member of society. One of the ways governments are meeting this challenge is by encouraging communities to build upon their collective strengths or social capital. The underlying

principles of social capital have had tremendous influence on both physical neighbourhood design and community development.

### ***3.3.6 Social Capital***

The theory of social capital is continually developing and being applied to varying fields including urban and community planning. There are a multitude of definitions and measures of this concept (Goddard, 2003; Putnam, 2000; Onyx et al, 1997). For the purpose of this study however, Onyx and Bullen's (1997) work dealing with participation in the community, connection with neighbours, family and friends, tolerance of diversity, trust and safety and value of life will be used in the research design.

The term was originally coined by Bourdieu and further developed in his work in the field of cultural sociology. He characterized social capital as part of an interrelated family that included cultural, symbolic and economic forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1977).

Equally influential in the development of the term was Putnam (1998; 2000) who described social capital as a series of community networks stemming from common societal norms: "Social capital refers to the norms and networks of civil society that lubricate cooperative action among both citizens and their institutions" (Putman, 1998 p. v).

The concept has been used as a basis for developing neo-traditional (New Urbanist) neighbourhoods that claim to enable interaction and social mixing (Calthorpe et al., 2001). Because of the similarities between the principles of smart growth and school-centred neighbourhoods, the topic is worthy of consideration. For example, both concepts

focus on developing community through physical focal points and aim to exact similar social changes (Talen, 2002). Research into the application of social capital as a means of measuring the success of new neighbourhood concepts reveals debate over its effectiveness (DeFlippis 2001; Sander, 2002). Despite this lack of agreement, social capital continues to contour the relationship between community design and development.

Equally important is a growing body of research dealing with the link between social capital and student achievement (Goddard, 2003). Studies showing a positive correlation between strong social supports within new immigrant communities and success at school (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) are a good indication of social capital's impacts on community development. A study by Ainsworth (2002) demonstrated that the amount and quality of social capital within a neighbourhood could be used to predict educational outcome.

Farrell et. al (2003) explain this relationship by stating that:

...children who grow up in communities possessing high levels of social capital are more likely to be exposed to helpful social networks or adults who provide positive resources, information and opportunities that may be educationally beneficial (2003, p.3).

These studies illustrate that social capital can be viewed as a mechanism of life-long learning and that it plays an important part in the inter-relationship between well-structured physical and social environments. This suggests that communities which develop around a commonly valued focal point tend to foster social networks that continually improve both the social and physical environment. For this reason, the

following section will explore the idea behind learning-based community development.

### ***3.3.7 Learning-Based Community Development***

Community development is a broad area of study that encompasses a range of definitions. The main body of research in the field of learning-based community development comes from Faris (2000) who has written extensively on learning communities in rural areas throughout North America and Europe. He defines community development as “action by people locally to enhance the social, cultural, environmental and economic condition of their communities” (p. 55). Learning-based community development expands on the definition of lifelong learning. Learning becomes a social activity as opposed to an individual activity. As members of a community acquire new skills, they apply them to benefit the social, cultural, environmental and / or economic conditions of a community.. A example of this might be an Earth Day celebration held in a park to inform others about composting methods and local food production.

Learning-based community development strengthen the social, cultural, environmental and economic conditions of a community by providing opportunities to learn skills related to these areas. Faris (2000) writes that learning-based community development encompasses six objectives<sup>5</sup> that enable people to enhance the social and economic conditions of their community:

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<sup>5</sup> A detailed explanation of the six principles of learning-based community development as well as examples can be found in Faris’s report to the B.C. Ministry of Community Development. (See Faris, 2000).

i. Citizenship/Civic Education

Early promoters of community development have often included civic education as a mandate of their work. Civic education or learning to be an effective democratic citizen happens when schools, local organizations or concerned citizen groups work to meet the needs of a community. This is sometimes referred to as service learning when accompanied by a formal reflection on the purpose and effect of the need being met (p. 101).

ii. Health Promotion

Health promotion can take many forms in community development from promoting community gardens to establishing safe injection sites. The objective is to ensure that members of the community actively work to become aware of issues related to health and longevity (p.102).

iii. Economic Development

Often a mainstay of community development models, economic development in a learning-based arrangement looks to strengthen the local economy by providing ongoing formal and non-formal training, apprenticeships and skill development. Successful projects tend to underline the importance of establishing local connections to both physical and human resources such as buy local campaigns and neighbourhood job recruitment (p.105).

iv. Environmental/ecological sustainability

The strength of a learning-based community development model is probably best demonstrated in its effectiveness to bring about awareness of environmental and ecological issues. The contextual learning element of the model is well suited to demonstrating natural processes and their connections to everyday routines (p. 106).

v. Rural/urban development

Organized community groups conduct ongoing needs assessments. Once a need for a physical resource such as a police detachment or training center is determined, community groups must then collect resources, funds and manpower to move the project forward. Learning-based community development initiatives help groups attain the skill to access resources and funding at all government levels. Where possible, local skills and businesses are included in the process (p. 108).

vi. Social development/planning

A comprehensive community development model should include a means of ensuring that social programs are available to those who need access to them. Learning-based community development initiatives work to bring about awareness of the availability of such programs as well as a network of support to eliminate long-term dependency on them (p. 110).

A learning-based approach to community development helps link each of the above-mentioned objectives by encouraging interdisciplinary discussion and reflection. The emphasis on lifelong learning means that lessons learned in one area are eventually transferred and applied to other areas. Over time, a community process emerges and the similarities between objectives become more defined.

### **3.3.8 Conclusion**

The school-centred neighbourhood concept has emerged as both a physical and social response to the demands of growing urban environments. On the one hand, it can be seen as way of creating unique “learning communities” that encourage community development by fostering social capital and lifelong learning. On the other hand, research reveals a need to build a better understanding of the impacts SCNs have on the surrounding neighbourhoods and communities. As smart growth researchers begin looking at the roles schools play in contributing to sprawl, further study is needed to determine how policies enable information and resource sharing between municipalities and school districts. Planners, educators and community builders need to come together to “think about how the seemingly un-school related decisions, particularly around (re)development, impact local schools” (Vincent, 2006, p. 436). The study of SCNs involves both an understanding of the physical and social dimensions that influence the success of cities as well as the quality of schools and communities.

## **4 The Grande Prairie Community Knowledge Campus**

This chapter introduces the Grande Prairie Community Knowledge Campus (GPCKC) as a case and means of exploring the relationship between a multi-use school facility and the surrounding community. It begins with a brief background on school reserve allocation in Alberta. A location and program description of the GPCKC follows.

### **4.1 School Site Planning in Alberta – A Backgrounder**

In order to better understand the manner in which schools are sited in Alberta, it is important to understand the process that drives school construction. Prior to 2007, the Provincial government took a “hands-off” approach to school building; opting instead to act as an approval body for all school capital projects. The process began with school boards identifying priority areas for new construction and modernization based on the student enrolment in neighbouring schools. A formula for determining a school’s level of utilization (utilization rate) would then guide the process for prioritizing capital construction projects. This capital plan was then submitted to both the Infrastructure and Education ministries for further review. Members from both ministries would review the capital submissions via a board known as the Learning Facilities Advisory Committee (LFAC). LFAC would then advise the school boards which capital submissions were approved for funding. School boards would use this allotted funding to retain an architect and commission a school that would meet the needs put forth in the originally submitted capital plan.

Land on which schools were to be built was provided to school boards without cost through a provision within the Municipal Government Act known as section 666 - Municipal Reserve and Subdivision Regulation. This section of the Act enables the municipal subdivision authority to request that the owner of a parcel of land that is the subject of a proposed subdivision dedicate:

- Part of that parcel as municipal reserve;
- Money in place of municipal reserve;
- Any combination of land and money in place of municipal reserve; or
- A deferred reserve caveat.

This process evaluates the gross developable area outlined in the subdivision application and sets aside ten percent of this land for school, park and recreational facility use. Gross developable land is defined as:

...the total area of the parcel of land less the land required to be provided as environmental reserve, roadways, public utilities and the land made subject to an environmental reserve easement (City of Edmonton, 2006).

Throughout this process, the municipality works with the land developer to come up with a neighbourhood structure plan. This plan details the land use patterns that will ultimately define the area. School planners are consulted on various aspects pertaining to the placement of the school. For example, adjacent roadways are evaluated to ensure that student transportation requirements function with respect to student catchment areas.

After 2007, the Province announced a change in the way school capital projects would be handled. Alberta Infrastructure would broker a public-private partnership (P3) contact with a builder capable of producing large numbers of schools within a short timeframe.

The rapid growth rate in the province dictated a need to build 18 new schools by 2010. The Ministry would be responsible for hiring an architectural firm to design a series of standard core school designs that could be “easily adaptable to different sites across the province” (Alberta Education, 2007). The core school design was conceived to be highly adaptable to changes in demographics in that modular classrooms would be attached or removed over the lifecycle of the school and as a community changes. Building themselves would be leased from the builder for a 30-year contract during which time the builder will remain responsible for major repairs and maintenance (Alberta Education, 2007, p.1).

In order to ensure that all 18 schools would be constructed in the four year time horizon, the Province assembled a team that would oversee the siting and construction of each school. Known as the ASAP team, this group would work with school planning officials as well as municipal planners to ensure that the land selected for the construction was fully assembled. In cases where the land developers were in early stages of subdivision, the ASAP team would ensure that roadway access and utility services were to be curbside by dates contractually agreed upon.

## **4.2 Case Study Overview**

### ***4.2.1 Introduction***

The original concept for the GPCKC came as a result of a policy review document entitled “A Vision for a Community Knowledge Campus in Grande Prairie” (Yates et al., 1998) in June of 1998. At that time, City administrators were forecasting continued growth at a rate in excess of 2% per year and noted, as well, that the school aged

population accounted for 25.5% of the total population (City of Grande Prairie, 1998). This was also reflected in the capital plans for the Grande Prairie Catholic School Board which had expressed the need for a new high school. At the same time, the opportunity arose for the municipality to purchase one of two proposed sites for the CKC project. The first site consisted of a 36 hectare parcel of land on the southwest quadrant of the city known as Mission Heights. The second parcel, approximately 30 hectares, was location was in northeast quadrant of the city known as Northridge. Ultimately, the City chose to build in Mission Heights due to the size and location of the parcel relative to the existing population. A detailed review of the Mission Heights site can be found in Section 5.2. A map illustrating the two locations relative to one another can be found in the Appendices.



Figure 4. GPCCKC Site Plan. Source: Barr Ryder Architects, 2009

#### ***4.2.2 Vision and Guiding Principles***

A key part of the GPCKC is the commitment to improving and enhancing the city through educational partnerships. This is further reinforced in the municipal vision for the project as detailed in the strategic plan. The Municipality sees its future in these terms:

Grande Prairie is a community committed to making itself the greatest place to be. It is a city with a vision. It is committed to being on the leading edge of public service provision.

Education – in its broadest sense – is the future. We are a learning society. How we create institutions and their physical buildings in ways that maximize that learning potential will determine which cities grow and which cities go slowly into decline.

Grande Prairie is determined to position itself at the leading edge of educational change. It is determined to create educational facilities that look and function as key elements in the city's future vision. Education which:

- Reinforces Grande Prairie's role as the key northern regional centre
- Is delivered in ways which are fiscally responsible
- Is 'smart' and embodies the 'cybercity' image
- Fosters a safe and caring community
- Is physically beautiful

Public agencies in Grande Prairie work collaboratively toward these goals. They believe in partnerships, synergies and the 'win-win' solution (Yates et al., 1998).

The GPCKC is strongly rooted in inter-agency collaboration and the model has been adopted by other cities including Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge.

#### ***4.2.3 Project Partners***

The CKC currently consists of a twin ice arena, a gymnastic facility and a Catholic high school. An aquatics centre and field house are slated for completion in 2011 and a Public high school is planned for construction in 2012 pending provincial funding. The complex

involves partnership arrangements between the City of Grande Prairie, the Catholic and Public School Boards, the G.P. Regional College, and the Province of Alberta.

The use of the facilities by each partner is governed through a joint-use agreement known as the Standing Committee on Recreation and Education Services (SCORES). Partners in the agreement arrange for cost sharing of utilities and services. The municipality provides recreation facilities while the Catholic School Board and Provincial Government fund and provide school facilities. The G. P. Regional College uses the high school facility during the evening for numerous training courses via the SCORES agreement. The school boards and regional college have full access to the ice arena, and gymnastics facilities and will have similar access to the field house and aquatics centre upon its completion.



**Figure 3. Top View of the GPCKC. Source:  
Barr Ryder Architects, 2009**

## 5 Review of Defining Documents

The idea for an integrated multi-use school facility was initially explored through a series of planning documents initiated by the City of Grande Prairie and the three surrounding school boards (Grande Prairie and District Catholic Schools, Grande Prairie Public School District and Peace Wapiti School District No. 33). By combining the capital requirements of the schools boards with the recreational needs of the municipality, the City of Grand Prairie began planning community knowledge campus with an innovative set of partners. The following chart outlines the project's defining documents:

<b>Document Title</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Date Published</b>
A Vision for a Community Knowledge Campus	Yates et al., 1998	June, 1998
Community Knowledge Campus Mission Heights Assessment	Infrastructure Systems Ltd., 1998	September, 1998
Community Knowledge Campus Preliminary Feasibility Analysis	City of Grande Prairie, 1999	February, 1999

As part of this study, each document was reviewed using the following project research questions and related sub questions:

1. How was the purpose of the GPCKC defined in this document?
2. What terms are used to refer to the purpose, goals and objectives of the GPCKC in this document?

Defining documents were examined to determine the underlining physical and social objectives of the project. The research findings were then used to compare against the results of the interview data thus acting as a measure of the project's success.

## 5.1 A Vision for a Community Knowledge Campus

A Vision for a Community Knowledge Campus - Yates et al., 1998	
<p>How was the purpose of the GPCKC defined in this planning document?</p>	<p>The purpose of the CKC, as defined in this document, was to meet the growth needs of the school districts as well as those of the municipality while “reinforcing Grande Prairie’s role as a key northern regional centre” (p.4). The report outlines a series of seven guiding principles which the CKC sought to follow (p.16):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Meeting the needs of students by:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Proposing to bring facilities and services to students that would otherwise be available to them only outside school time (p.16).</li> <li>b. Proposing to bring services to the school setting which make education possible for adult students wishing to upgrade their education and needing childcare or young athletes who need to combine their training with education (p. 17).</li> <li>c. Proposing to bring state of the art services to students, through linking the school/campus to the city’s Cybercity initiative (p. 18).<sup>6</sup></li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Provisioning adequacy, equity and commitment by:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Proposing a new and radical approach to school planning and construction, since it levers community investment to make scarce education dollars go farther (p. 21).</li> <li>b. Proposing a long-range approach to capital planning phased over 25 years (p. 21).</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Local decision-making through:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A vision supported by all school districts, city council and other partners (p. 22).</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Effectiveness and efficiency through:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. An approach to capital planning that maximizes cost effectiveness and efficiency (p. 22).</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

<sup>6</sup> The Cybercity Initiative was a municipal projected aimed at developing IT infrastructure and inter-connectivity for the City of Grande Prairie. A task force chaired by the City Manger was struck in 1996 to collect and distribute information about the impact of technology on municipalities in light of an emerging knowledge-based economy.

	<p>5. Long-range planning by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Proposing a visionary approach that encompasses a 20 plus year time horizon (p.23).</li> </ul> <p>6. Innovation through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A proposed approach to educational planning that will be a model for the rest of the province (p.23).</li> </ul> <p>7. Accountability through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A proposed partnership that will work, with the partners all prepared to be judged by the success of the vision and concept (p.23).</li> </ul> <p>This report was the key document for defining the vision of a multi-use school facility that could “allow a variety of community and social benefits to be realized [and] provide a springboard for further economic development for the city and achieve various real dollar savings” (p.3). Although cost efficiencies were emphasized throughout the report, the social implications of the proposal were also an important consideration. For example, it highlights the fact that school facilities could be used “outside of school hours for a wide range of purposes” (p.3) thus alluding to lifelong learning objectives. Furthermore, the report outlines learning-based community development opportunities for technological partnerships and resources to the benefit of “school students, local industry and the general public” (p.3). Social capital objectives are also alluded to in the form of access to community recreation: “students will have access to a wide range of recreation facilities that would otherwise not be available to them” (p.3).</p>
<p>What terms are used to refer to the purpose, goals and objectives of the GPCKC in this document?</p>	<p>The terminology used in <i>A Vision for a Community Knowledge Campus</i> tends to be decidedly broad because this is an early-stage visioning exercise. Page 18 includes a series of community and social benefits. For example, the report talks about the potential for this type of large-scale development to encourage a “critical mass” aimed at attracting other partners such as the municipal Library Board, health centres and the Regional College. It also refers to the potential benefits of making more amenities available to the public leading to an “economy of scale”. Other important phrases used in this planning document include promoting healthy communities by “linking health, wellness and active living programs” (p.18) and promoting “greater family involvement in education”</p>

	<p>(p.19). An outline of the economic benefits of the development note that the a project of this nature may “enhance the city’s image as ‘leading edge’” (p.19), contribute to “better use of land” (p.19) through a “balance growth plan” (p.20) and improved transit service through “simplified bussing” (p.20) for both students and city users.</p>
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## 5.2 Community Knowledge Campus Mission Heights Assessment

<b>Community Knowledge Campus Mission Heights Assessment – Infrastructure Systems Ltd., 1998</b>	
<p>How was the purpose of the GPCKC defined in this planning document?</p>	<p>The <i>Community Knowledge Campus Mission Heights Assessment</i> report served as a means of evaluating potential locations for the development. The report was prepared on behalf of a local developer and presented to the City of Grande Prairie in support of a Community Knowledge Campus to be located in the southwest quadrant of the city known as Mission Heights as opposed to locating it at a similar sized site known as Northridge on the northeast quadrant of the city. The report provides a site planning analysis of the Mission Heights district through a series of measurements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Location The report outlines the preferred location of the GPCKC at the intersection of Wapiti Road (108<sup>th</sup> Street) and 68<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The site represents a 36 ha parcel adjacent to the established Mission Heights neighbourhood and “creates a natural and logical extension of the existing residential development” (p. 4). This statement suggests that the location of the GPCKC should be central as opposed to being placed in a low-density outlying area.</li> <li>2. Development Constraints The 90 acre parcel is described as vacant farmland with a gradual 1% slope from the northwest to the southeast. “This topography creates conditions well-suited to gravity servicing for sanitary and storm sewer at a minimal cost. Overall, there are no topographic constraints to limit site development” (p.4).</li> </ol>

This section of the report also highlights the adequacy of the site with regard to minimum distances required through the zoning bylaw relative to an existing sewage treatment facility and landfill. Section 12 of the Subdivision and Development Regulation (AR 212/95) requires that a 300 m distance separation be provided between the working area of a sewage treatment facility and a “school, hospital, food establishment or residential use”. Section 13 requires a 450 m separation from the working area of a sanitary landfill. The location being considered in this report is located 1.6 km to the south of the Mission Heights site, which far exceeds the minimum distance separation requirements in the Provincial Regulations (p.4).

### 3. Servicing and Infrastructure

When this report was released, the proposed Mission Heights site was accessible by Wapiti Road, a major arterial roadway with linkages to all parts of Grand Prairie and surrounding areas. The report also makes mention of future construction plans including the installation of a bridge over Bear Creek to the east and an extension of 74<sup>th</sup> Avenue from the north. By limiting access at this point (74<sup>th</sup> Avenue) to emergency vehicles, all traffic generated by the Campus would be “restricted to these arterial roads and would be kept out of the neighbourhood” (p.5). Contrasted to the proposed northeast site, “[Northridge] would create additional neighbourhood traffic due to its reliance on residential collectors to provide alternate access. The report states: “Development of the Mission Heights site would result in the creation of a major destination node on the south side of the City, presenting opportunities to develop a transit terminal at this location” (p.6). The idea of creating a community node suggests that those planning the GPCKC likely recognized and contemplated the social and physical impact of such a development.

### 4. Legislative Framework

In this section of the report, a number of municipal planning documents are reviewed to ensure that the Mission Heights CKC proposal was inline with the affected planning documents:

**a. Grande Prairie Municipal Development Plan (MDP)**

The 1995 MDP is the City’s primary planning policy document. The report states that the proposal is consistent with the purpose and intent of the MDP by “developing within close proximity to existing development” (p.7).

The report states further, that a campus concept addresses the “need to plan and design recreational developments in a way that reduces maintenance and operations cost, ensures that adequate recreation areas are provided with each school site and that school site planning should be coordinated with Community Services and School Boards” (p.7).

**b. Mission Heights Area Structure Plan**

When this report was released, the Mission Heights Area Structure Plan identified the proposed location as zoned for future single family and multi-family residential development. An amendment of the plan was needed in order for the CKC to be approved.

**c. Grande Prairie Recreation Master Plan (1997)**

The Recreation Plan at the time had recently been revised to emphasize partnerships with school boards to share the cost of developing and operating new recreational facilities. Interestingly, the term “joint-use” is first used in this section of the *Community Knowledge Campus Mission Heights Assessment* report. Until this point, no other planning document dealing with the GPCKC had used the term.

**d. Grande Prairie Transportation Master Plan (1996)**

The Transportation Master Plan identifies both “Highway 40 and 68<sup>th</sup> Avenue as major arterial roadways which facilitate access to the [Mission Heights] site” (p.8). No other reference to the GPCKC is made in this section.

**5. Land Availability**

This section of the report compares the two proposed locations based on the amount of available reserve land. Both the Northridge and Mission Height sites were identified as not having sufficient reserve dedications and required the municipality to purchased additional land from the invested developers.

	<p>6. Population Catchment</p> <p>The report states that an important consideration in the site selection was ensuring that the facilities were located in close proximity to the majority of its prospective users. The conclusions that resulted from a review of both the Northridge and Mission Heights locations were that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. “A significantly larger portion of the City’s current population is in close proximity to the Mission Heights site than Northridge” (p.10).</li> <li>b. “The presence of a greater population base in the southwest now and in the future will result in lower school transportation costs for the Mission Heights site” (p.13).</li> </ul>
<p>What terms are used to refer to the purpose, goals and objectives of the GPCKC in this document?</p>	<p>This report dealt mainly with reviewing details surrounding the site planning of the GPCKC. The purpose goals and objectives of the GPCKC were only referred to in relation to the 1998 Yates Document. Of interest, however, was the fact that terms such as “joint-use” and “central node” as well as emphasis on situating the development near existing communities (i.e accessibility) suggest that a fair amount of thought went into how the social and physical environment would be affected by the project.</p>

### 5.3 Community Knowledge Campus Preliminary Feasibility Analysis

Community Knowledge Campus Preliminary Feasibility Analysis - City of Grande Prairie, 1999	
<p>How was the purpose of the GPCKC defined in this planning document?</p>	<p>The <i>Community Knowledge Campus Preliminary Feasibility Analysis</i> was presented to council in February of 1999. The report took a broader, more holistic look at the project and its potential impacts. The concept was defined as follows:</p> <p>“The Community Knowledge Campus will initially accommodate educational, recreational, health and cultural entities that offer a wide variety of programs and services to residents in Grande Prairie and surrounding area. Most programs and services will permit participants of all ages to acquire knowledge, information and experiences through the process of learning and discovery” (p.2).</p> <p>The document further defines the term Community Knowledge Campus as:</p> <p>“A holistic approach to achieving optimal development of the educational, physical, mental emotional, cultural and social components of each individual” (p.21).</p>
<p>What terms are used to refer to the purpose, goals and objectives of the GPCKC in this document?</p>	<p>An accompanying visual presentation of the <i>Preliminary Feasibility Analysis</i> describes the goal, vision and opportunity of the GPCKC in the following terms:</p> <p><b>GPCKC Goal</b>  “Inter-agency collaboration leading to shared facilities” (p.11).</p> <p><b>GPCKC Vision</b>  “ A leading edge education concept that is a model of inter-agency collaboration” (p.12)</p> <p>“A multi-purpose facility focusing on quality of life in a technological world that demands lifelong learning” (p.12).</p>

	<p>“A comprehensive community centre serving the region for community arts and cultural and economic development” (p.12).</p> <p><b>GPCKC Opportunities</b></p> <p>To improve the concept to share:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Indoor spaces (educational, recreational, cultural and health)</li> <li>b. Structural components (building construction)</li> <li>c. Mechanical systems (energy savings)</li> <li>d. Electrical, Data/Communication systems (shared savings)</li> <li>e. Outdoor Recreational Sports Fields (school/community shared usage)</li> <li>f. Human Resources (operation/maintenance)(p. 23).</li> </ul> <p>The document further describes lifelong learning opportunities that could be fostered through the proposed community knowledge campus:</p> <p>“Lifelong learning opportunities contribute to a greater quality of life in Grande Prairie” (p.24).</p> <p>A focus on potential social capital opportunities are described as follows:</p> <p>“There will be increased social interaction for students and facility users through recreation activities which will help develop leadership and team building skills” (p.26).</p>
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**5.4 Conclusion**

A review of the above three defining documents demonstrates a progressive focusing of the goals and objectives of the GPCKC. Broad terms and phrases presented in the 1998 Yates report are given clearer more concise explanation in the 1999 Feasibility Analysis. Specific social and physical impacts are envisioned for the community knowledge campus concept and base level vocabulary begins to emerge. Phrases such as “inter-

agency collaboration”, “lifelong learning”, and “community networks” are used to describe the role of the community campus within Grand Prairie.

Furthermore, there is evidence of a gradual shift in focus as the GPCKC becomes less focused on “cost savings” and “economies of scale” and more focused on the social impacts of the proposed development.

## **6 Data Analysis**

The collection of both key informant and facility user data was used to gather information about the planning process and user experience of the Grande Prairie Community Knowledge Campus (GPCKC). Interview data was then digitally transcribed using standard voice recognition software. Once in digital format, the interview data was coded for key phrases associated to the three main social objectives and sorted into categories as they related to each of the interview questions. The following is a summary of the coded data.

### **6.1 School and Municipal Planner Interviews**

Two school board planners and four municipal planners were interviewed during the first week of July, 2009. All planners interviewed were directly involved in the planning and visioning process of the GPCKC and had worked together extensively when presenting the concept to the public. Questions posed to each planner were designed to establish the intent of the CKC project and further explore how some of the social implications of the project came into play in the original vision. Each of the questions was analyzed for recurring themes during the three coding phases in order to arrive at a “grounded theory” about role and function of the GPCKC. Part of the analysis involved tabulating and characterizing the occurrences of various elements in the interview transcription. The following outlines the number of times specific characterizations were mentioned during the course of the interview in accordance to each specific question.

Q1.	Establish a Focal Point	Cost Savings	District Needs	Recreational Needs	Integration of Services	Increase Tourism	Community Building / Life Long Learning
What was the original intent of the GPCKC ?	6	5	4	2	4	3	5

Answers given to this question were important in the development of the overall study.

All key informants mentioned that the intent of the original concept was meant to establish a focal point for the city of Grand Prairie. Municipal planners involved in the project mention overall cost savings as an important reason to move forward with the proposal. Sharing capital and operating resources to meet the needs of the school board and municipality were also mentioned as key elements of the project. When this question was posed school board planners, each alluded to enhancing community development and contributing to life long learning. For example, one interviewee responded:

...having a project of this type helps our schools interact with the larger community and provides recreational and educational opportunities for those interested in staying involved.

Interestingly, the term mentioned most often by those involved in the initial planning of this project tended focus on cost savings. One municipal planner stated that:

...the project hinged on highlighting the efficiencies gained by planning an integrated development. Both the province and the public needed to see that there were tangible savings to be had in site acquisition, construction costs and operating expenses.

Q2.	Lifestyle	Community Recreation Requirements	Needs of the School Boards	Community Gathering Space	Focal Point
What types of community considerations do you take into account when planning for a new school facility?	6	7	5	5	3

Several of the respondents needed clarification about what constituted “community considerations”. These were explained to be public elements, both physical and social, that could be used to enhance a feeling of community. The most common response by both municipal and school board planners was “community recreation requirements”. One school board planner indicated that establishing a culture of fitness and recreation at the community level would help strengthen and reinforce curricular physical education outcomes in the student population. Not surprisingly, the term “lifestyle” came up as the second most commonly used term in the interview data. For example, upon completing an extensive review of school facility design research, one municipal planner stated:

The design of a school should espouse the values of the community. When you combine it with public recreation facilities it needs to fit into the user’s lifestyle. The design of the facility now has to mesh with the overall goals of the greater community, town or city. Otherwise there is no way of getting wide spread support for the project.

It is important to note that both the “needs of the school board” as well as the need for “community gathering space” came up equally as often suggesting that both were considered necessary components for a school-centred community.

Q3.	Providing learning opportunities	Encouraging cooperative diversity	Value building	Planning for a community focal point	Providing public facilities	Community consultation
What role do you think your organization has in terms of building community (i.e. community development objectives)?	4	4	3	1	3	1

Interviews with key informants involved members of two broad organizations: school boards (both catholic and public) and the City of Grande Prairie. When asked the question, “What role do you think your organization has in terms of building community?” the results demonstrated clear differences between both groups. Planners and project administrators working for the school boards tended to focus on social elements such as “providing learning opportunities”, “encouraging cooperative diversity”, and “value building”. A school board administrator exemplified the emphasis on these intangibles in the following response:

Our mandate, first and foremost, is to provide students with high quality learning opportunities. The values that ensue: respect for others, appreciation of diversity and a commitment to lifelong learning all lend themselves to building a better community.

Those interviewed from the municipal side focused mainly on physical elements such as “planning for a community focal point”, “providing public facilities”, and “ensuring a forum for community consultation”. One interviewee who worked on the Preliminary Feasibility Analysis report stated that:

...one of the main roles of the municipality was bringing together all parties to create a proposal that would be acceptable to the taxpayers of Grande Prairie and palatable to the Province. We were clear about what our constituents needed to be built in their community. We just needed to focus the vision.

Q4.	School	Parks	Church	Community League	Recreation Centre	Commercial Area
What do you consider to be the most important focal point in a residential development?	6	6	1	3	5	1

Responses to this question weighted heavily on schools and park sites. Recreation centres, which tend to be on or near park sites, were also brought up frequently. Interestingly, both municipal and school board planners emphasized “schools” and “parks” as important focal points. Although municipal planners tend to have more exposure to current planning trends such as new urbanism, only one respondent suggested that a community focal point should be a commercial area. When asked why schools and parks should be community focal points, all but one interviewee stated that these were the most important draws for developers. One municipal planner articulated this sentiment by stating:

Developers are keenly aware of what sells. Neighbourhoods which lack schools don’t sell nearly as well as those that have them. Successful developments contemplate the needs of the families which they try to attract and subsequently ensure that schools are a key focal point.

Q5.	Centrally Located	Walkable	Access to public Transit	Accessible to Community
In what ways should schools be interconnected with the rest of a neighbourhood?	6	5	6	5

Both school board and municipal key informants responded similarly to the question of interconnectivity of schools to the greater community. Most commonly mentioned were the concepts of centrality, walkability and access to public transit. One interviewee stated:

The way that schools are integrated into a community affects the health and wellbeing of students. We know that childhood obesity is on the rise and that encouraging students to walk can help this problem. Yet so many of our schools are not located in areas that students are able to walk to...

The theme of “accessibility to the community” also came up frequently during the coding process. Several interviewees mentioned that in order for schools to be an integral part of any given neighbourhood, they needed to be assessable after hours to the rest of the community. Prior to the GPCKC concept, municipal planners had looked at similar multi-use school facilities in Oregon and California. One planner spoke about how these facilities remained viable over the long term:

In order for these (multi-use school facilities) to remain viable, they need to be a draw. Part of what makes them a draw is programming for people of all ages. The other part is insuring that people can get to and from the complex through a variety of different ways.

Q6.	multi-modal accessible	Values Learning	Publicly Accessible	Focal Point	Multi Use
How would you define a “School-centred Neighbourhood”?	4	5	5	6	5

The term “school-centred neighbourhood” is a broad enough term that it allowed for a wide range of interpretation. When asked for a definition, the key informant group touched on a number of common themes. Interviewees stated that the community had to have a learning related “focal point”. One interviewee stated that “...the facility should be a node; recognizable as both a social and visual place of importance.” Mentioned several times over the course of the interview was the term “multi-use”, and “publicly accessible”. For example one school planner stated the following:

A school-centred neighbourhood values learning as common goal of the community. It should be more than just a school as it should to meet the needs of a broad range of community members.

The municipal planners interviewed tended to focus more on the physical features of a SCN. These included: the ability to easily and readily get to a school and recreation facility (terms such as ‘walkable’, ‘transport-connected’, ‘transit-oriented’ were grouped under the umbrella term “multi-modal accessible”. “Open to the public”, “accessible after-hours”, “offering a wide range of programs” and “being connected to related amenities” (statements such as connected to sports fields and attached to recreation facilities where grouped under the “Multi-Use” heading). Several municipal planners pointed out that the GPCKC was a catalyst for neighbourhood growth in the south side. When compared to the level of residential development in the Northridge area (one of the site considered for the development of the GPCKC) Mission Heights is significantly more built out.

Q7.	Fosters Friendship	Commonality / Common Interests & Goals	Encourages Communion	Information Sharing
How do think that schools play a role in developing networks within the community?	6	5	4	2

This question was designed to gather information about the importance of schools in the development of social capital. The word “network” needed clarification for several interviewees. It was important to explain what I was looking for without giving specific examples. Networks were described as varying types of social connections and interactions that added value to life in their community. One interviewee described the role of schools in this way:

Schools play a very important role in developing networks. For example, you get to know your neighbours quite well when you drop your children off at school. You hear about issues in the community.... People come together for a common goal; be it fundraising for the school library or volunteering at school events. This is further reinforced when the school offers evening classes or is connected to a recreational facility like a pool or arena.

The most commonly used phrases dealt specifically with establishing friends and having common interests and goals. These were tabulated under Commonality / Common Interests & Goals. Phrases such as “bringing people together”, “having gatherings” etc. were tabulated under “Encourages Communion”.

Q8.	Common Vision Amongst Partners	Community “Buy-In”	Organizational Complacence
What do you see as the greatest obstacle, within you organization, facing the planning of multi-use school facilities?	4	5	6

Both municipal and school planners tended to provide similar responses to the question of obstacles faced when developing multi-use school facilities. A number of issues referring to organizational complacence were identified. These included a reluctance to explore options that had not been tested and disagreement of responsibilities between partners. Other challenges included coming to understand the differing goals and needs of the partners. Operational issues involving unionized staff were also seen as obstacles. One municipal planner provided their view of the challenges faced during the planning phases of the GPCKC:

Multi-use school facilities take a lot of convincing for all parties involved. Residents want be sure that their tax dollar is being used efficiently. School boards want to be assured that a joint venture isn’t going to interfere with future capital requests. The municipality wants to be assured that that sufficient park space is being addressed. Developers want to be assured that they are getting fair market value for land. City councilors want to be sure

that their constituents are being heard. The Province wants to be sure that they are viewed as non-biased when approving capital requests.

The common consensus among the key informants interviewed was that the obstacles were never insurmountable and served to establish procedures for dealing with joint ventures in the future.

Q9.	Governance Model	Joint-Use Agreement	Shared Responsibility	Adequate Representation
What difficulties arise from partnership agreements between stakeholders?	4	5	3	2

Partnership agreements related to multi-use facilities are normally referred to as joint-use agreements. Three key informants expressed difficulty translating the spirit and intend of the project in legal terms that could be agreed upon by all partners. One interviewee stated the following:

Although everyone may have good intentions for the project, making sure that the joint-use agreement reflects those intentions can sometimes be difficult and time consuming.

The remaining three key informants noted that devising an equitable governance structure was a challenge. Deciding on how each party would be represented and to what degree was stated as key obstacle. For example one school planner stated the following:

By far, the most difficult and time-consuming part of building a Community Knowledge Campus is establishing an effective governance model and an equitable joint-use agreement.

Q10.	Larger School / Park Sites	Joint Partnerships (P3 schools)	Emphasis on Life-Long Learning	Campus Concept
What changes do you see in neighbourhoods and communities of the future in terms of the provision of school sites?	4	3	4	1

Four of the key informants interviewed indicated that future school sites would serve larger catchment areas. One interviewee stated the following:

We no longer work off of the one school per neighbourhood model of delivery. It's no longer economically viable. A larger school and park site provides a greater degree of recreational service while providing a critical mass to attract specialized programming.

One school board planning representative commented that several other municipalities were beginning to take interest in the success of the GPCKC.

The goal of the Community Knowledge Campus was to create a facility that would enhance the quality of life for the people of Grande Prairie. Hopefully, the campus concept will be used in other parts of the city and be seen as cost efficient and effective. As we journey into a knowledge-based, 21-century economy, the emphasis on life-long learning will shape the way we plan our communities and the types of learning spaces that are built.

Q11.	Exchange of Ideas/ Information / Expertise	Overlapping Impacts	Helps with Community Planning Initiatives	Better Park Site Planning
How important is it to work collaboratively with other partner organizations? Why?	3	3	5	6

All six interviewees felt that the school and municipality should engage in collaborative planning initiatives as a means of planning schools and park sites. Most felt that collaborative planning helped municipalities decide on the size and number of park sites and the level of transit service required in new communities. Several interviewees also indicated that there was a distinct overlap of impacts between school and municipal

planning decisions. For example, a school board’s decision to change catchment areas (i.e. allowing for open boundaries) or to offer special programs at a site (magnet school programs, sports academies etc.) has a direct impact on transportation patterns.

Sharing information and resources was also seen as helpful in aging communities where a school might be considered for closure. Two municipal planners stated that having the municipality involved early in the school closure process would allow municipalities to look at ways of encouraging redevelopment in aging communities. One municipal planner made the following statement:

We [city planning staff] have always worked to some degree with the school boards. The GPCKC gave us the opportunity to work closer with the school boards and get a better understanding of the importance of education in relation to community planning.

Q12.	Green Building	Encouraging Public Transit	Walkability	Inter-Agency Co-operation
What are some planning initiatives that you think should be incorporated into school facility planning?	4	3	3	3

This question was first posed to the municipal planners in the key informant group. These planners felt that the municipality had a number of strengths that school board planners could benefit from when planning for new facilities. They cited recent initiatives to promote green building, encourage the use of public transit, and develop more walkable communities. One municipal planner stated the following:

Schools are important elements of public infrastructure. In order for schools to seamlessly integrate into the urban fabric, they need to reflect the goals set forth in our MDP [Municipal Development Plan]. This includes building LEED facilities, and developing regional programming that doesn’t require parents to drive across town everyday.

When this question was posed to school board planners, they stated that in addition to planning with the MDP in mind, they felt that it was equally as important to consider the role schools in Grand Prairie beyond just a “service facility”. These planners noted that schools have a significant transformative influence. Developers tend to be more inclined to construct neighbourhoods in areas in which schools are being planned for. One school board official stated the following:

So often, we think of schools as a tool in fulfilling a mandate – to educate children. Schools are only one part of a set of tools that are needed to educate. When we combine schools with recreational opportunities and community services, the effect is amplified and resonates beyond the student to their families and indeed to the greater community.

## **6.2 Facility User Data Analysis**

During the second week of July, 2009, 12 interviews were conducted with various users of the Community Knowledge Campus. The interviewees were evenly divided between female and male. All interviewees were between the ages of nineteen and fifty-two and were selected randomly. Those interviewed were asked to provide their postal codes in order to be able to map where users were coming from to use the GPCKC. Seven of the twelve users interviewed came to the GPCKC from areas within ten kilometers of the facility. Nine of the twelve users drove to the facility while two had ridden their bicycles and one had walked. A visual representation of this data is included in the appendices.

The following series of questions were posed to the user group:

Q1.	Save Money on Rec Centres and Schools	Promote Learning	Foster Social Interaction	Meet the Recreation needs of the City
What do you think are the purposes of the GPCKC?	2	10	8	11

This question was designed to be broad in order to gain a wide range of opinions and perspectives on the subject. The most common response was that the GPCKC was built to accommodate a growing demand for recreation-based activities within the city. When the interviewees were asked to consider the form and combination of partners ten of twelve responded that it was meant to encourage learning and foster social interaction in addition to providing recreational activities. Nine of the twelve respondents were familiar with the municipal programs meant to promote life-long learning:

I know the City was really pushing the concept of life-long learning through the Cybercity initiative. The GPCKC was a way of combining schools and recreation to make a place that people could take their kids to school in the day, take classes or play league sports at night.

Q2.	Yes	No
In your opinion, are the purposes of the GPCKC being met?	10	2

Ten of the twelve interviewees responded that they felt that the purpose of the GPCKC was being met. Most felt that the project encouraged them to be more active and provided opportunity to better themselves through access to courses and recreation classes. Of those that felt that the purposes were being met, all felt a personal benefit from having this type of development in their community. One respondent commented:

The CKC is exactly what the city and the south side needs. It's a cutting edge public school and community education centre with world-class recreation amenities. It affords the people of Grande Prairie the same or better educational and recreational opportunities as those being provide in large cities like Edmonton and Calgary.

Two respondents felt that the project was too expensive and that the city would have benefited from spreading the facilities throughout the City.

Q3.	Gymnastics Centre	Aquatic Centre / Multiplex	High School	Twin Ice Arena	Sports Fields
What would you say is the most important feature of the Community Knowledge Campus? Why?	1	1	1	5	4

In terms of physical amenities at the GPCKC, the most used tended to be the twin ice arena and the sports fields. This was mainly due to the popularity of organized hockey and soccer in Grande Prairie. Eleven of the twelve users felt that the aquatic centre and multiplex would be the CKCs biggest draw upon its completion. All interviewees felt that the GPCKC was a draw for tourists in Grande Prairie and that the facility would attract more tourists once it is operational. One interviewee made the following observation:

The project is great as it's built currently. I tend to come here at least twice a week for hockey games and to for special council meetings. The addition of the aquatics centre and multiplex will enable the City to bid on major sporting events and will have the ability to host national and international conferences. The building the public high school will make this possible because the facility can act as a one stop event centre.

Q4.	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly
How often to you use the Community Knowledge Campus?	1	8	2	1

Eight of the twelve interviewees used the GPCKC at least once a week. Of these eight, 5 had children who attended the adjacent high school. All of the interviewees felt that those in the surrounding community used the GPCKC regularly. All but one respondent felt that the residents of Grande Prairie looked upon the project as favorable. One user described the popularity of the GPCKC as follows:

This project has had a major impact on the City’s south side. It’s become a gathering place for a whole assortment of community groups and sports clubs. Businesses in the surrounding area have benefited too.

Q5.	Easier to Take Classes	Easier to Learn a New Skill	Easier to Meet People	No Effect
Has the construction of the Community Knowledge Campus made it easier to take classes or to learn a new skill?	11	11	11	1

Eleven of the twelve interviewees felt that construction of the GPCKC had a positive impact on their willingness to take evening classes or take up a new sport. Ten of the twelve, felt that the facility also made it easier to meet new people because of their ability to gather in larger numbers:

The CKC is a meeting place for everyone on the south side. High school kids hang out there afterschool. Hockey parents meet before and after games. Community groups hold meeting at the high school. There’s even a few running groups who meet up in the parking lot on Saturday mornings.

Q6.	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly
Before the construction of the Community Knowledge Campus, how often did you get together with friends?	2	8	1	1

Those interviewed stated that Grande Prairie has always had a strong sense of community because of its relatively remote geography. Nine out of twelve respondents felt that they were getting together more frequently since the construction of the GPCKC. Of these nine, eight felt that the GPCKC had a positive influence on the frequency that they met with friends. One interviewee explained it as follows:

People in Grande Prairie are generally very social. The community has a long history of farming and holds true to their rural traditions. The GPCKC allows new comers to the city to meet people with similar interests and it draws people from across the city. Before it was built, there was less of an opportunity to meet new people and make connections with others.

Q7.	Yes	No	No Effect
Do you think that you have meet more people since the construction of the Community Knowledge Campus?	7	4	1

Seven of the twelve interviewees felt that they met more people since the construction of the GPCKC. Of the seven who felt this way, all thought that the reason for this could be directly attributed to the GPCKC. One respondent explain this as follows:

Grande Prairie is a relatively small town. You see people about, but often times you don't have an opportunity to actually get to know them. When you meet at the CKC, you can actually feel comfortable approaching people. The chances are that they have children who attend the high school or they are there for the same class as you or they that they play a sport you're involved in.

Q8.	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly
Prior to the construction of the Community Knowledge Campus, how often did you participate in intramural sport activities?	1	8	2	1

This question was modified slightly because of the use of the term “intramural”. This term is used to refer to organized league sports and several of the interviewees were also involved in informal sports activities such as street ball and shinny. Eight of the twelve interviewees mentioned that they were involved in regular sport activities at least once a week prior to the construction of the GPCKC. Seven of the twelve felt that they since the construction of the twin arenas, their involvement in team sports has increased. One interviewee who stated the following:

The city moved to build the GPCKC for a number of reasons. They could have constructed several standalone facilities, which would have been fine. The facilities meet the growing needs of the community however; together they act as a social draw, which benefits the Grande Prairie far more than singular structures. In essence, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

This statement was echoed by several interviewees. Most felt that the recreational benefits of the GPCKC were second to the social outcomes.

Q9.	More Involved in Sports	More Involved in Civic Meetings	More Involved in Courses	No Change
How do you think that your involvement in social activities has changed since the construction of the Community Knowledge Campus?	3	6	2	1

The previous question tended to be a natural segue into this question. Eleven of the twelve respondents felt that they were more involved in social activities since the

construction of the GPCKC. All eleven stated that they could directly attribute their increased social involvement to the GPCKC. For many, this was because of the increase in available sport activities. Six interviewees stated that they were able to conveniently meet in a central location to attend workshops and municipally lend public consultations.

One interviewee stated the following:

Having a multi-use facility in the south side makes it a lot easier to get involved in city issues. Families can meet their kids afterschool for their hockey game and still be able to attend a public consultation since they are all taking place on the same campus. It suits people with busy lives and that's what I appreciate about the development.

Q10.	Newspaper	Internet	Friends and Family	Radio
Where do you get information about events in your community?	3	6	2	1

This question was asked of the interviewees as a way of gathering information about the social networks of the GPCKC users. Information sharing is an important component in the evaluation of social capital. Users were asked about how they received information with regard to community events, classes, sports leagues and community meetings. Of the twelve interviewees, six stated that they learned about community events through community blogs and websites. Three stated that they got the majority of their information from the local newspaper. Two stated that friends and family informed them about events and one stated that the radio was their main source of information.

Q11.	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	Rarely
How often do you volunteer in your community?	0	1	1	3	7

Three of the twelve interviewees answered that they volunteer at least once a year for sport league fundraisers. One responded that she volunteered weekly at a soup kitchen. One stated that they volunteer monthly for the Red Cross and seven stated that they rarely volunteer. The five interviewees who had done some volunteer work within the past year were also asked if they were volunteering more often, less often or the same amount after the construction of the GPCKC. Three of the five interviewees felt that they were volunteering more often. The other two stated that they their level of volunteerism had remained the same. When asked why ones level of volunteerism had increased post CKC construction, one interviewee stated the following:

I think that I volunteer more now that the CKC is built. For the most part, you get to know a lot of about things that are happening in the community and about volunteer opportunities. Also, more recreation facilities mean more sport leagues and sport leagues are entirely volunteer run. To me, it makes perfect sense.

Q12.	Belong to one or more Community Betterment Groups	Do Not Belong to any Community Betterment Groups
Do you belong to any community betterment groups? For example a roadway clean-up group? You do not need to say which group or groups you belong to.	4	8

This question was posed to the user group as a means of gauging learning-based community development. Four of the twelve interviewees answered that they belonged to

one or more community betterment groups. Of these four, all thought that the GPCKC helped enable community betterment by providing an opportunity to meet likeminded individuals in an accessible location. When asked how their involvement in betterment groups had changed since the construction of the GPCKC, interviewees stated that they were more inclined to get involved in community development because they felt more invested. One interviewee stated the following:

I chose to get involved in the Healthcare Review Committee through a few people who were on my indoor soccer league. We were all in the healthcare profession and wanted to form a group that could lobby our MLA about retaining service in rural communities.

Q13.	Belong to one or more Community Betterment Groups	Do Not Belong to any Community Betterment Groups
Prior to the construction of the Community Knowledge Campus, did you belong to any community betterment groups? Again, you do not need to say which group or groups you belong to.	3	9

Noting whether or not interviewees thought that their involvement in community betterment had changed as a result of the GPCKC was an important measure of Learning-based community development. Prior to construction, those belonging to community betterment groups numbered three while those not belonging to betterment groups numbered nine. Compared to the previous question, this represents an increase of 17 percent. Although the change in involvement cannot be directly correlated with the construction of the CKC, it remains worthy of notice.

### **6.3 Reflections on the Interview Processes**

In retrospect, additional questions may have enhanced the research. Questions posed to the facility user group could have included information about how long they had been in living in the area and what their reasons were for choosing to live there. This would have provided more information to support or reject the theory that CKCs influence the physical form and development of a community thus contributing to a SCN.

Questions posed to the key informant group could have also been improved by asking about the public consultation processes prior to the construction of the GPCKC. It would have been interesting to hear what concerns and objections residents brought up during these meetings. This information could have been used to compare against data gathered collected by facility users post construction.

## **7 Conclusions, Recommendation and Directions for Further Research**

### **7.1 Conclusions**

This study set out to answer a series of research questions in order to gain a better understanding of the processes involved in the planning and development of the Grande Prairie Community Knowledge Campus. The Community Knowledge Campus was chosen as a case study because of the unique nature of the project. As a multi-use school facility, it acts as an anchor for the community and to a certain degree, the municipality as a whole. By studying the physical and social impacts of this development, we gain a clearer perspective on school-centred neighbourhoods (SCNs). Defined in this study, a SCN is one which views a multi-use school facility as an important hub. SCNs have unique characteristics that can be evaluated by looking at physical and social attributes. Also of interest was the fact that the GPCKC was the product of inter-agency planning between the municipality and school boards. The process that preceded its development was an important component of this study. Specifically, the author looked at the initial vision and purpose of the project and evaluated it against input from users and key informants, post-construction. Information gathered from planning documents at the inception phase of the GPCKC was used to compose a line of evidence to demonstrate a rationale for the development and to measure any change in this rationale over the course of its construction.

The following section is a summary of key findings based on information collected through the literature review, document review and collected interview data. The salient

points are organized according to each of the major research questions. These points help to comprise a series of recommendations for future SCNs.

### ***7.1.1 What is the purpose of a CKC? / What did the GPCKC model set out to achieve?***

A Community Knowledge Campus is generally a cluster of structures located either centrally in a community or within easy access of an existing population through multiple modes of transportation. Nature of the complex provides complimentary educational and recreational services to a wide range of community users. The literature review indicates that CKCs aim to enhance educational and recreational activities by providing access to various forms of learning (Katz, 2004). They are a means by which a neighbourhood addresses social values such as lifelong learning, social capital and learning-based community development (Lackney, 1999, Bingler et al., 2003, Faris, 2000).

Research specific to lifelong learning in relation to learning communities indicates that in order for continuous learning to take place, the community needs to have access to educational and recreational amenities (Blank, 2005). CKCs tend to operate beyond traditional school hours and are often physically connected or in close proximity to other learning and recreational facilities. Furthermore, school features such as classrooms, gymnasiums and libraries are open for use by the public through partnership or joint-use agreements. This encourages opportunity for classes and programs to be offered (Katz, 2004). Learning opportunities become part of the routines and functions of a community and help create a culture of learning (Bingler et al., 2003). Similarly, research related to social capital suggests that communities with a strong focal point (education, recreation or otherwise) tend to foster social networks (Goddard, 2003, Ainsworth, 2002). Because

CKCs are designed to be community hubs, it goes to follow that they have a positive influence on social capital. Data collected from facility users also supports this assertion. Indicators of increased social capital by facility users include statements alluding to increased friendships, hobbies and involvement in organized sport. Learning-based Community Development (LBCD), as described in the literature review, is a locally based process meant to improve the social, cultural, environmental and economic conditions of a community (Faris, 2000). This is done through knowledge gained as a result of lifelong learning or through social networks. The assertion made in this study was that CKCs helped foster both lifelong learning and social capital and therefore should increase the capacity of the community to make improvements in their social, cultural, environmental and / or economic condition. Interview data collected from facility users showed only a slight increase in involvement in community betterment groups after the construction of the GPCKC.

The Grande Prairie CKC model was designed to define the city's image as a "Smart City" in an era of changing technologies and educational delivery methods. Like other CKCs, the GPCKC was purposed as a community hub. As part of the interview process, key informants (i.e. municipal and school board planners) were asked about the original intent of the GPCKC. Several respondents made reference to the municipality's CyberCity initiative which helped create a mindset for forward looking community developments. This points to the fact that the originators of the GPCKC model recognized that societal patterns were in transition and that, in order to meet the demand of facility users in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, changes to the provision of education and recreation

needed to be actualized. The GPCKC was therefore designed to bring together educational and recreational facilities in a manner consistent with current times and in recognition of fiscal restraints. The following section is a more detailed look at the initial intent of the GPCKC.

### ***7.1.2 How were the purposes imagined in the initial plans?***

Determining the original intent and purpose of the GPCKC was the focus of the document review as well as certain questions posed to the key informant interview group. Of interest, was whether or not those planning the GPCKC intended for the project to function in the same way as the literature review suggested. Changes in the purpose of the GPCKC as alluded to in the planning documents were also important to note. Three defining documents helped plot the course for the eventual construction of the community knowledge campus in Grande Prairie. The initial purposes as defined in each document are summarized below.

The first document entitled “A Vision for a Community Knowledge Campus” is a broad overview of the types of potential benefits of the project and outlines several guiding principles. The document focuses mainly on the economic benefits and efficiencies of the CKC. A large section of the document details the potential cost savings associated with situating various facilities on a single parcel of municipal reserve land. When asked about the initial purpose of the CKC, municipal planners were very familiar with this document and used language and phrases that directly echoed this report. For example, several planners made reference to the “economy of scale” that could be realized by combining a high school, recreation centre and privately run cafeteria. School board planners were

also familiar with this report however, when asked about the intended purpose of the GPCKC, they tended to focus on the social benefits detailed in the document.

Specifically, both school board planners made reference to a part of the document that dealt with lifelong learning objectives. Note the similarities in language used in the document and in the collected interview data:

Yates et al., 1998 (p. 16) – *Guiding Principles (1.b)*

Meeting the needs of students by proposing to bring services to the school setting which make education possible for adult students wishing to upgrade their education and needing childcare or young athletes who need to combine their training with education.

School Board Planner Interview Transcription (Q.1) – *What do you think are the purposes of the GPCKC?*

The GPCKC was meant as a way of making education possible for students of all ages. It enables residents to combine recreation and education in a way that benefits the greater community.

The second defining document entitled “Community Knowledge Campus Mission Heights Assessment” was mainly a technical report used to make the case for siting the GPCKC in the southwest quadrant of the city. The report covers important land use considerations such as development constraints, site servicing and legislative conformity. Although the document was mainly a pragmatic and somewhat clinical look at where the CKC should be built, it did highlight two important research points:

- a.) The report states that the GPCKC “would result in the creation of a major destination node on the south side of the City, presenting opportunities to develop a transit terminal at this location” (p.4). This suggests that one of the main purposes of the GPCKC was to provide a central focus point for a large area of

the city. It also suggests that the construction of the GPCKC may lead to the development of a transit terminal. Both of these assertions speak to the physical influence of the CKC.

- b.) The report looked at two proposed locations for the GPCKC (Mission Heights and Northridge). At the time of publishing (1998), both sites were undeveloped and roughly equal in size. A comparison of the two sites 11 years later demonstrates a significant difference in residential development as well as in suburban form. Section 7.1.3 explores this issue in more depth.

The third defining document entitled “Community Knowledge Campus Preliminary Feasibility Analysis was submitted to Grande Prairie city council in February, 2009. The report presented a detailed review of the fiscal and social benefits of the CKC proposal with more emphasis on the later. When asked about how this document was used in the planning process, one municipal planner noted that, at city council’s request, the document needed to highlight the social significance of the proposal in conjunction with the fiscal details. As a result, the document was reflective of the municipality’s vision and goals as articulated in the 1999 Grande Prairie Strategic Plan (see section 4.2.2).

When looking at the defined purpose in all three planning documents, the review reveals that the purpose remains generally consistent but becomes progressively more detailed.

The initial Yates document emphasized the economic benefits and efficiencies gained by the proposal and provided a cursory overview of the potential social benefits of such a development. The Mission Heights site planning report presented a somewhat more quantitative overview of the project as well as a comparison of an alternate site. The 1999 Preliminary Feasibility report built on the information from the previous two documents

and presented a more holistic overview of the potential economic, social and physical outcomes of the GPCKC.

***7.1.3 What is the effectiveness of this concept? Did it achieve what the plans intended? Does it align with what the literature says?***

Overall, when comparing the data collected through the literature review and the coded interview transcriptions, the purpose of the GPCKC has been realized. Interviews with the facility users demonstrate an increase in lifelong learning indicators post CKC construction. Eleven of the twelve interviewees stated that construction of the GPCKC has made it easier to take classes. Well over half of those interviewees (seven of twelve) stated that they had participated in an increased number of continued learning opportunities post CKC. Nearly all facility users interviewed (eleven of twelve) stated that the GPCKC made it easier to meet people and take part in classes. When asked about changes to their social networks, seven of twelve felt that they had met more people post CKC construction. These findings are consistent with the literature related to lifelong learning and social capital.

The facility user data collected in relation to learning-based community development indicators however, showed only a slight increase. When asked about their involvement in community betterment groups, four of twelve interviewees stated that they belonged to one or more of such groups. Prior to the GPCKC, only three of the twelve interviewees stated that they belonged to one or more community betterment groups. This suggests that civic participation in Volunteerism in the study group was also surprisingly low.

Only five of twelve stated that they volunteer at least once a year. Of these five, only three felt that their level of volunteerism had increased post CKC construction.

The literature review also indicates that school-centred neighbourhoods (SCNs) have a physical influence on the surrounding urban fabric (Vincent, 2006, Blank, 2005). This is to say that school site planning affects a whole series of land use issues including transportation patterns, urban design, suburban form, residential / commercial development (Katz, 2004, Chung, 2002).

The Mission Heights site assessment document includes a 1998 map of Grande Prairie showing the two proposed locations (Mission Height and Northridge) for the GPCKC (see Appendix B). Because both sites are similar in terms of size, utility services and proximity to existing neighbourhoods, they make for a valuable comparison 11 years after construction. The physical impacts related to the construction of the GPCKC are difficult to positively correlated within the context of this study however, a number of interesting observations can be made. The following table compares the built form of the neighbourhoods surrounding each of the two sites in 1998 and in 2009.

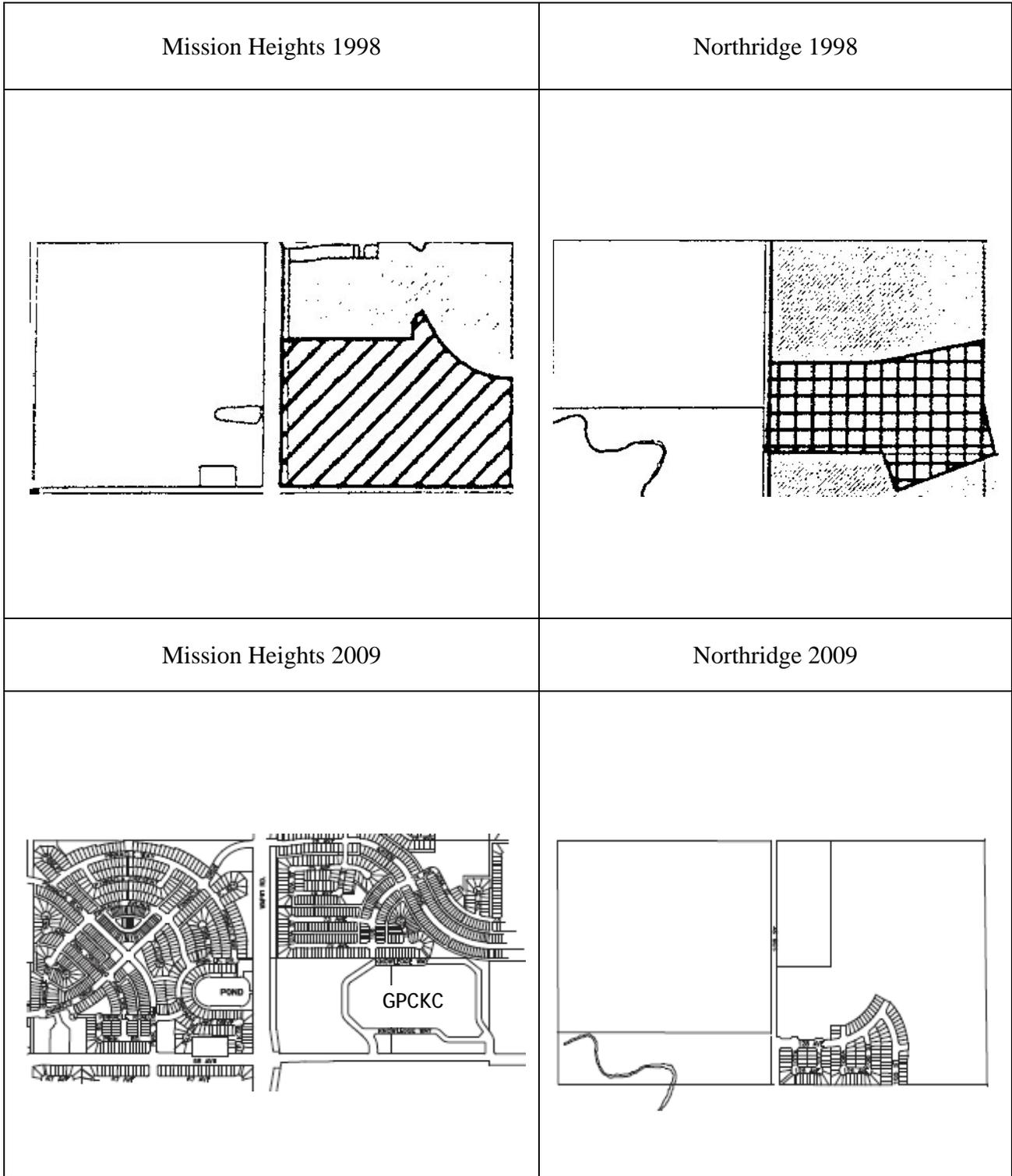


Figure 6. Mission Heights and Northridge Land Development Comparisons. Source: City of Grande Prairie, 2008

Perhaps most notable is that Mission Heights (the area surrounding the GPCKC) is significantly more developed than Northridge. The number of residential units in Mission Height outnumbers those in Northridge 5 to 1. These differences in the number of residential units naturally affect the level of transit service. Not surprisingly, there are more bus routes servicing Mission heights and the adjacent neighbourhood compared to Northridge. Also interesting is the noticeable difference in urban form in the area surrounding the GPCKC. A distinctive “garden city” style neighbourhood has developed directly east of the GPCKC.

These physical attributes support the proposition that multi-use school facilities have both a social and physical influence on the surrounding neighbourhood thus contributing to a school-centred neighbourhood.

#### ***7.1.4 What recommendations can be made for municipal and school planners about future multi-use school facilities and for the development of SCNs?***

The GPCKC case study elucidates a number of important lessons for planners looking to develop future school-centred neighbourhoods. Perhaps the clearest recommendation that can be made is to take a broad look at any proposed multi-use school facility.

Understanding the historical influence of schools within community as well as the relationship between schools and societal patterns allows for a more comprehensive approach to community building. Co-operative planning between school board and municipal planners can yield positive outcomes for health communities.

The following recommendations can be used by both municipal and school board planners when developing SCNs:

### **1. Centrally Located and Linked to the Community**

Design CKCs that take advantage of existing and future residential developments. A central location ensures that the facility (or facilities) remain an integral part of the community as it grows and matures. This is supported both in the literature review (Springer, 2007; Vincent, 2006; Bingler et al., 2003) as well as in the document review (Yates et al., 1998; City of Grande Prairie, 1999). Linkages into existing and future developments should also be varied to accommodate a range of transportation modes. CKCs should be accessible by roadways, pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths thus catering to a wide range of community users. Careful site planning should ensure that large open spaces such as sports fields and parking lots do not isolate the facility. The location of these open spaces relative to buildings should serve to highlight the facility as a visual focal point.

### **2. Efficiency and Flexibility**

The GPCKC serves as a good example of efficient building practices that bring a wide assortment of community uses together. This was one of the reasons that the GPCKC progressed from concept to reality (Yates et al., 1998). Multi-use school facilities avoid duplication of services and provide opportunities for synergy and diversity in programming. The literature review reveals that changes in societal trends affect the design and educational purpose of school buildings (Lackney et al., 1999). Responsive school design is a reflection of the needs within a

community. Recognizing efficiencies in building techniques in combination with an understanding of changing educational models will help inform the design of future schools in relation to their surroundings (Katz, 2004; Moore et al., 1994). A school-centred approach to neighbourhood planning takes advantage of both these elements. Furthermore, multi-use school facilities tend to service a wider range of community users while allowing for eventual changes in purposes the community ages.

### **3. Joint Use Agreements**

The governance structure of a CKC is as important as the services it provides. A legally binding joint use agreement ensures that all partners are afforded an equal say in the functioning of the CKC and agree on a common philosophy. By establishing a steering committee that meets regularly to discuss operational issues, the CKC can remain responsive to changes in educational and recreational provisions. Issues that arise can therefore be dealt with swiftly and equitably.

### **4. Co-ordinate School Board Capital Planning and Municipal Land Use**

#### **Planning**

In most communities, school board capital planning takes place largely without prior input from the municipality. Similarly, municipal land use planning occurs with little more than a circulation of a proposal to affect school boards. By coordinating the actual planning process between the two agencies, a far more comprehensive plan can be developed. For example, knowing the long-term

capital requirements of a school board can help municipal planners establish an adequate amount of municipal reserve dedication in a future neighbourhood. Furthermore, the municipality should provide information about long-term recreational requirements. Coordination of these long term needs can result in significant cost savings when placed on a single centrally located reserve parcel. If additional land needs to be purchased to accommodate school and recreational requirements, a long-term plan can help guide budgeting targets.

#### **5. Establish a Common Planning Language**

All too often, trends in educational planning are as foreign to municipal planners as land use terminology is to school board planners. The reality, however, is that there is a symbiotic relationship between the two agencies. For example, specialized programming and open boundary policies can have a significant impact on transportation patterns and act as a draw potential for homebuyers in surrounding neighbourhoods. Therefore, an understanding of educational trends can help land use planning initiatives. Likewise, school planners armed with smart growth principles can look at ways to mitigate school-influenced sprawl, encourage walkability and create linkages that distinguish schools as focal points. The interview data also highlighted the fact that school planning is not solely *reactive* to neighbourhood development but indeed influential. This is to say that schools are reactive to societal changes but influential to land use patterns.

## **6. Community Planning and Neighbourhood Design Through CKCs**

Municipal planners strive to be great place-makers. As an alternative to planning communities around commerce, school-centred neighbourhoods are built around CKCs. This study points to positive social influences that can result from a well-planned multi-use school facility. This includes an encouragement of life-long learning, strengthening of social networks and an increase of community involvement in betterment organizations.

## **7.2 Directions for Further Research**

This study revealed a significant amount of information about multi-use school facilities and the influence they have on school-centered neighbourhoods. While several research questions were answered in this study, several more were raised. The intersection of school and municipal planning is a common thread throughout this project. Many of the suggestions for further research involve the confluence of both disciplines. A more detailed comparison of the workflows in both areas would make for a valuable study in and of itself. Building on some of the limitation of this project may also provide direction for further study. These are elaborated below.

The literature review, document review and data analysis dealt mainly with the social influences of multi-use school facilities on school-centred neighbourhoods. The physical influences of these facilities were not well explored. A quantitative analysis of transportation and land-use changes within a SCN may help strengthen the case for CKC funding. This may include a count of residential units pre and post construction. A comparison of land value in neighbourhoods featuring a CKC as compared to those that do not would also prove valuable.

Another important question might be to ask those who live near a CKC why they chose to move to the neighbourhood. Measuring changes in the perception of homebuyers is an important part of neighbourhood branding.

Other worthy investigations might include a look at the number of commercial developments around a CKC as a measure of economic spin-off.

Transportation studies are also a good measure of a successful urban environment. The number of bus routes intersecting a SCN may serve as an important indicator of the success of the project. As part of this study, interviewees were asked to provide their postal codes for the purpose of identifying how far they traveled to get to the GPCKC. Respondents were also asked about their mode of transportation. If the sample size was larger, a researcher would be able to get a more accurate picture of travel preferences of CKC users as well their reasons for choosing one mode over another. This information may be valuable for measuring a CKCs level of integration and interconnectivity in a community.

In order to construct a CKC as defined in this project, a wide range of partnerships need to be established and land needs to be made available to accommodate a range of services. The types of services allowed on school reserve land are dictated through each Province's Municipal Government Act. What changes would need to be made to the Act to allow for a diversity in complementary services? What impact would a change in the types of services allowed on school reserve have on the surrounding neighbourhood?

## **8 Glossary**

### **Community Knowledge Campus:**

“A structure or group of structures on a site located near the centre of a community. Its primary use is the provision of educational opportunities, along with a range of compatible partner uses, which collectively provide a focal point for the community...”

(Hughes et al. 2003 p. 47)

### **Joint Use Agreement:**

Formal partnerships that allow community groups to use school facilities in exchange for the use of public infrastructure such as swimming pools and ice arenas by school groups.

### **Learning-Based Community Development:**

“Community development that is constructed around the principles of lifelong learning so that the development of individuals and groups and the attainment of their economic development and social inclusion objectives are achieved through continuous acquisition and use of knowledge (traditional and new), skills, attitudes and values” (Faris, 2000, p. 17).

### **Learning Community:**

A neighbourhood, town or region that views community development objectives (citizenship/civic education, health promotion, economic development, environmental/ecological sustainability, rural/urban development, social development/planning) through the prism of lifelong learning.

**Lifelong Learning:**

A broad concept and organizing principle that views learning as a continual process.

Learning can be traditional or nontraditional taking place either in either a formal institution or via informal organized associations.

**New Urbanism**

A neo-traditional neighbourhood design philosophy that incorporates community development objectives through the use of smart growth principles. It is characterized by a return to traditional neighbourhood features such as mixed land use, compact urban form, central focal points and transportation nodes.

**School-Centred Neighbourhood (SCN):**

Both a physical and social construct, SCNs utilize one or more multi-use educational facilities to engage and promote lifelong learning, social capital and learning based community development. In its physical form, it is centred around a community knowledge campus that operates as a focal feature. The community that supports this facility makes up its social form. The use of this facility supports a wide range of community development objectives.

**Smart Growth:**

The American Environmental Protection Agency defines smart growth as “development that serves the economy, the community and the environment. It provides a framework for communities to make informed decisions about how and where they grow”. Smart

growth principles have been met with enthusiasm from planning philosophies such as New Urbanism and Transit Oriented Developments.

**Social Capital:**

Social capital refers to the networks, norms and values possessed by a community that make up its social fabric. It is a means by which a community meets its goals and objectives.

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## **10 Appendices**

### **10.1 Appendix A - Interview Guide**

The interview guide focuses on four key areas that address the research objectives of this study. Questions are designed to be open-ended and exploratory in scope. Responses will be coded for critical instances that can be categorized into the pre-identified themes of lifelong learning, social capital and learning-based community development. The same series of questions will be administered to all CKC users. Municipal and school board planners will be asked similar questions however the focus will be on inter-agency cooperative planning in relation to the GPCKC.

#### ***10.1.1 Interview Questions for CKC users:***

The following questions attempt to assess the role of lifelong learning in the lives of randomly selected GPCKC users. A preamble explaining the interview process as well as rights of the interviewees will also be read aloud:

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed about your use of the G.P. Community Knowledge Campus. This interview will last approximately 45 minutes. I will be asking you three series of questions. There are no right or wrong answers. I would be happy to repeat the questions if needed. You make take as much time as necessary to answer.

Please know that you have the right not to answer any question without affecting your rights as a participant in this study.

1. *What do you think are the purposes of the GPCKC?*
2. *In your opinion, are the purposes of the GPCKC being met?*
3. *What would you say is the most important feature of the Community Knowledge Campus? Why?*
4. *How often do you use the Community Knowledge Campus?*
5. *Has the construction of the Community Knowledge Campus made it easier to take classes or to learn a new skill?*

I will now ask you a series of questions about your social network:

6. *Before the construction of the Community Knowledge Campus, how often did you get together with friends?*
7. *Do you think that you have met more people since the construction of the Community Knowledge Campus?*
8. *Prior to the construction of the Community Knowledge Campus, how often did you participate in intramural sport activities?*
9. *How do you think that your involvement in social activities has changed since the construction of the Community Knowledge Campus?*

I will now ask you some questions about you and your community:

10. *Where do you get information about events in your community?*
11. *How often do you volunteer in your community?*
12. *Do you belong to any community betterment groups? For example a roadway clean-up group? You do not need to say which group or groups you belong to.*

*13. Prior to the construction of the Community Knowledge Campus, did you belong to any community betterment groups? Again, you do not need to say which group or groups you belong to.*

### ***10.1.2 Interview Questions for School and Municipal Planners***

Questions in this category are designed to learn more about the way new schools are planned in the context of community and in relation to other disciplines. The interesting aspect will be comparing how similarly or differently these questions are answered by municipal and school board planners. The questions are broken down into three categories: community focal points, barriers and future directions. As with the CKC user group, the stakeholder group (municipal and school board planners) will be read a preamble explaining the study and the rights of the interviewee:

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed about your involvement in the G.P. Community Knowledge Campus. This interview will last approximately 45 minutes. I will be asking you three series of questions. Please answer as truthfully as possible. I would be happy to repeat the questions if needed. You make take as much time as necessary to answer. Please know that you have the right not to answer any question without affecting your rights as a participant in this study.

- 1. What was the original intent of the GPCKC ?*
- 2. What types of community considerations do you take into account when planning for a new school facility?*

3. *What role do you think your organization has in terms of building community (i.e. community development objectives)?*
4. *What do you consider to be the most important focal point in a residential development?*
5. *In what ways should schools be interconnected with the rest of a neighbourhood?*
6. *How would you define a “School-centred Neighbourhood”?*
7. *How do think that schools play a role in developing networks within the community?*

I will now ask you a few questions about barriers in the planning process:

8. *What do you see as the greatest obstacle, within you organization, facing the construction of multi-use school facilities?*
9. *What difficulties arise from partnership agreements between stakeholders?*

Now I will ask you a series of question related to future directions in inter-agency planning:

10. *What changes do you see in neighbourhoods and communities of the future in terms of the provision of school sites?*
11. *What how important is it to work collaboratively with other partner organizations? Why?*
12. *What are some planning initiatives that you feel should be incorporated into school facility planning.*

### ***10.1.3 Interview Questions for GPCCKC Users – Design Rational***

Question 1 is meant to gather baseline information about what facility users saw as the intent of this project. Responses to this question are used to compare similarities and differences between responses from the key stakeholder group and the original planning documents. Questions 2 through 5 deal specifically with lifelong learning. The questions were formulated based on indicators established by the Canadian Council on Learning Composite Learning Index (Cartwright et al., 2006). They are designed in to measure change in activities associated with formal and informal learning opportunities. Questions 6 and 7 attempt to engage the interview in a discussion about the role of social networks. Questions 8 and 9 assume that intramural sports have a strong social component as most sport teams do. The last series of questions (10 through 13) focus on learning-based community development. A key line of questioning involves asking users about their involvement in community betterment groups. Answers to questions 12 and 13 will help establish a measure of community development as it is assumed that by belonging to such organization involves learning more about issues affecting their surroundings. It was also important to stress to the interviewees that they need not specify the organizations to which they belong.

### ***10.1.4 Interview Questions for School and Municipal Planners – Design Rational***

Questions 1 through 5 are aimed at uncovering the broad level of knowledge each participant brings to the planning process. Specifically, these questions explore the extent to which school board and municipal planners relate to each others roles and responsibilities. In question 6 and 7, the researcher is interested in finding out if social capital contributes to the perceived function of a school. The question I am asking in my

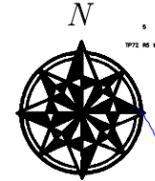
mind is, “does the social function of a school come into play when planning new schools?” Without defining social capital, what ways do you feel schools contribute to supportive links and networks? The first “barrier” question (8) is designed to get the interviewee to begin thinking about broader, institutional obstacles. The second question (9) shifts the focus to partnership arrangements. The goal in this line of questioning is to be able to distinguish between barriers within the organization and those between potential partners.

This final line of question will help determine what forward thinking municipal and school board planners think about how schools, communities and neighbourhoods are evolving to meet the need of a dynamic society. To what degree do municipalities and school boards see their professions as intertwined?

# CITY OF GRANDE PRAIRIE

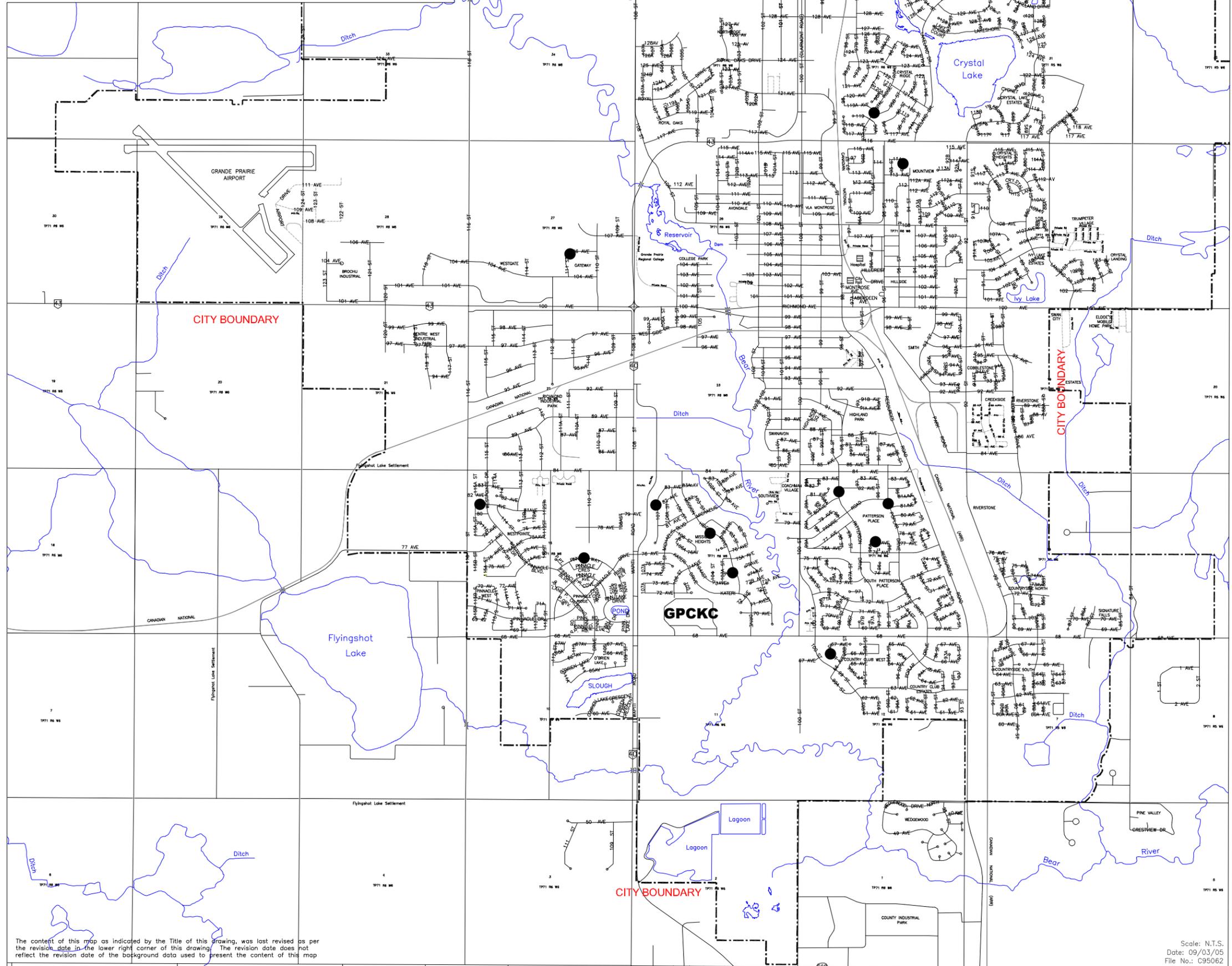


CITY BOUNDARY



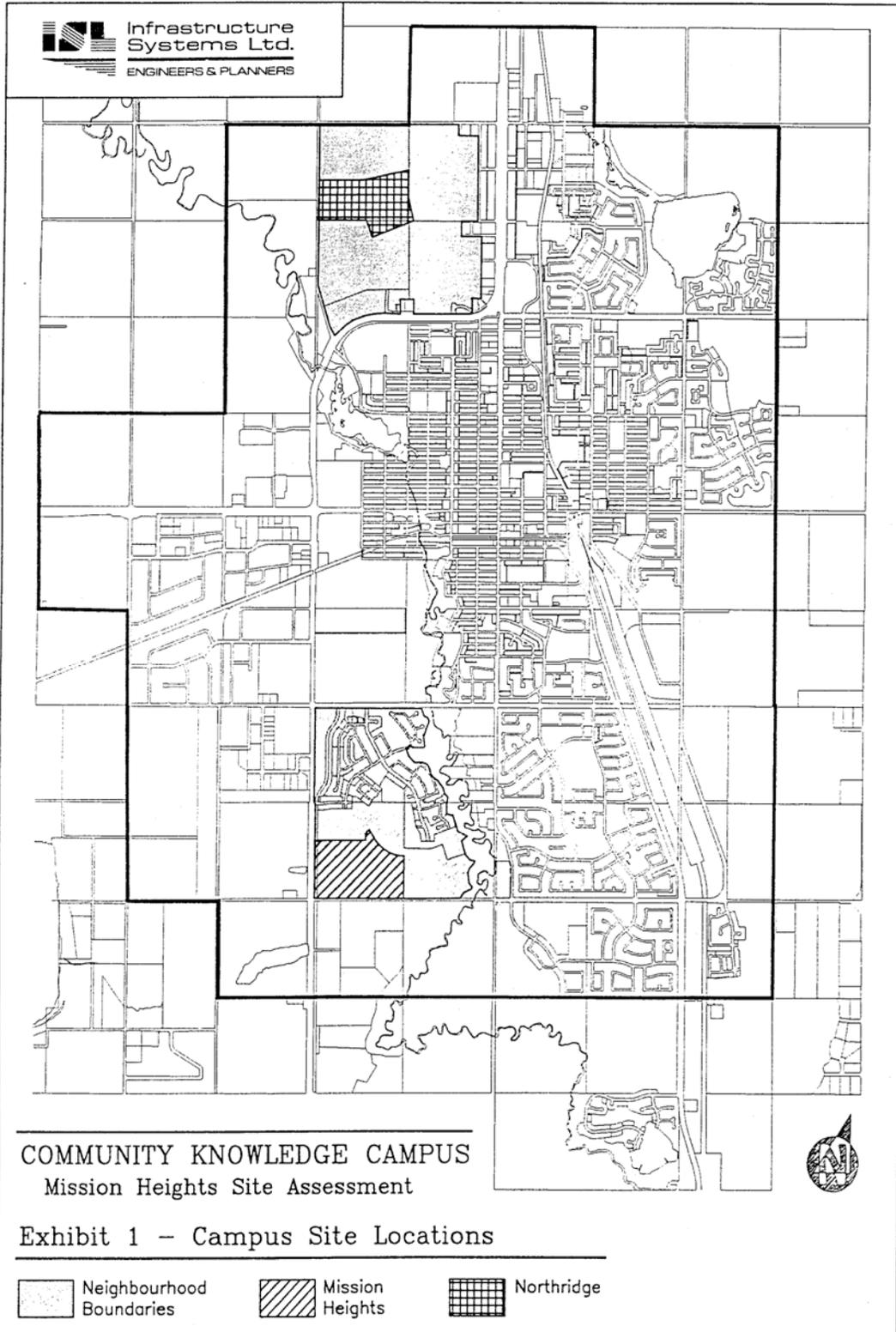
## 10.2 Appendix B – Facility User Residency Map By Postal Code

● Facility User Plotted by Postal Code

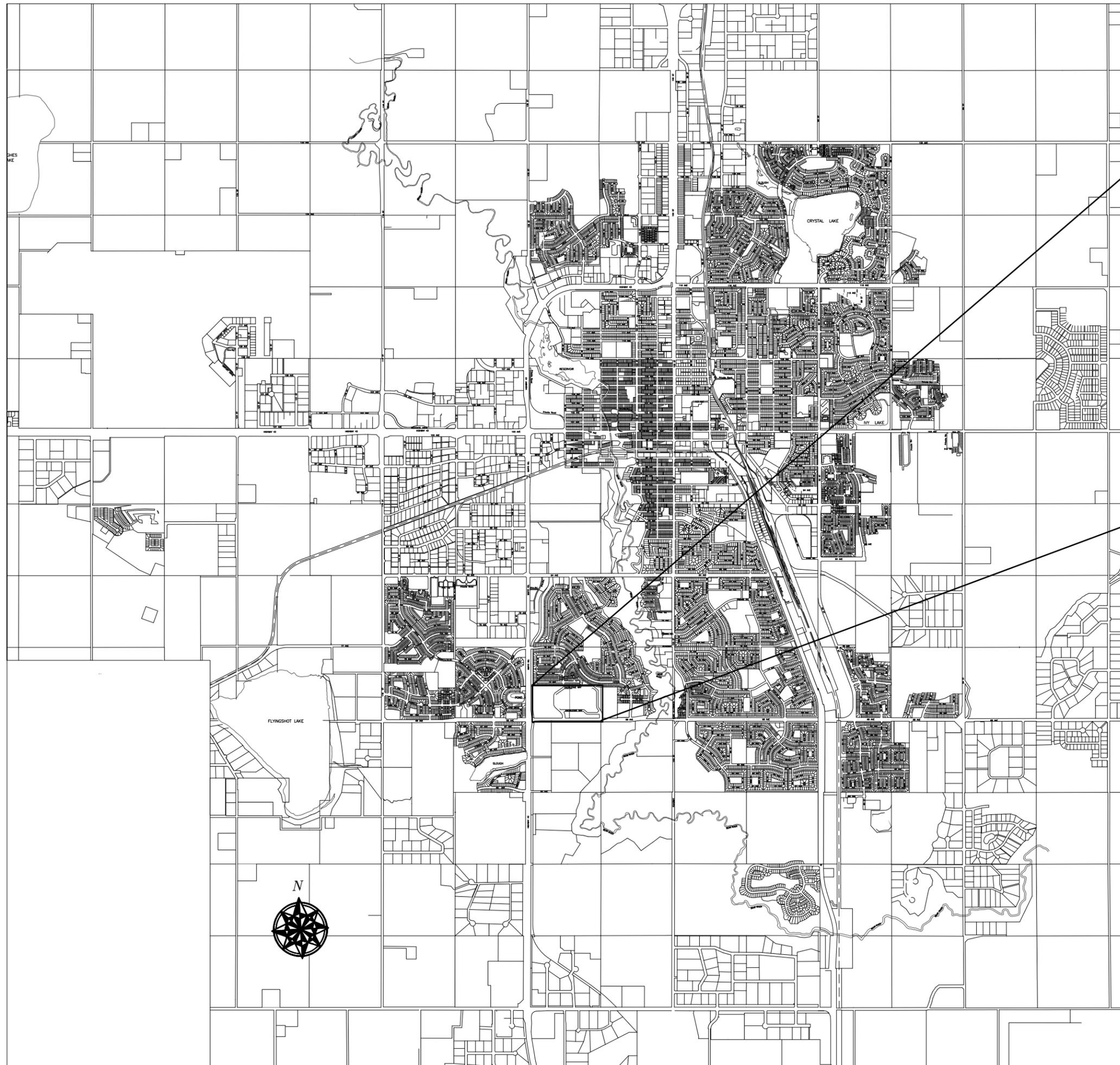


The content of this map as indicated by the Title of this drawing, was last revised as per the revision date in the lower right corner of this drawing. The revision date does not reflect the revision date of the background data used to present the content of this map

### 10.3 Appendix C – Map of Grande Prairie prior to CKC (1998)



10.4 Appendix D -  
Current Map of Grande Prairie and GPCKC



## 10.5 Appendix E - Ethics Protocol Submission

Protocol # \_\_\_\_\_  
(Assigned by HES Admin.)

### Fort Garry Campus Research Ethics Board Protocol Submission Form

Fort Garry Campus Research Ethics Boards  
CTC Building, 208 - 194 Dafoe Road  
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2  
Phone: (204) 474-7122  
Fax: (204) 269-7173

Psychology/Sociology REB     Education/Nursing REB     Joint-Faculty REB

Check the appropriate REB for the Faculty or Department of the Principal Researcher. This form, attached research protocol, and all supporting documents, must be submitted **in quadruplicate** (original plus 3 copies), to the Office of Research Services, Human Ethics Coordinator, CTC Building, 208 - 194 Dafoe Road, 474-7122.

**Principal Researcher: Robert Tarulli**

Status of Principal Researcher: **Student: Graduate**

Address (to receive Approval Certificate):  
**XXXX – XX Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, XXX XXX**

Phone: **780-XXX-XXXX (h)** Email: **XXXX@mac.com** Quickest Means of Contact: **780-XXX-XXXX (c)**

Project Title: **School Centred Neighbourhoods: An Assessment of Grande Prairie's Community Knowledge Campus**

Start Date: **June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009**  
Planned period of research (if less than one year): **5 days**

Type of research:  
**Faculty Research**     **Administrative Research**     **Student Research**  
Self-funded  Sponsored     Central     Thesis

Signature of Principal Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_/Robert TARULLI

For student research: This project is approved by department/thesis committee. The advisor has reviewed and approved the protocol.

**Name of Thesis Advisor: Dr. Richard Milgrom**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_/Richard MILGROM

Persons signing assure responsibility that all procedures performed under the protocol will be conducted by individuals responsibly entitled to do so, and that any deviation from the protocol will be submitted to the REB for its approval prior to implementation. Signature of the thesis advisor/course instructor indicates that student researchers have been instructed on the principles of ethics policy, on the importance of adherence to the ethical conduct of the research according to the submitted protocol (and of the necessity to report any deviations from the protocol to their advisor/instructor).

**Ethics Protocol Submission Form  
(Basic Questions about the Project)**

The questions on this form are of a general nature, designed to collect pertinent information about potential problems of an ethical nature that could arise with the proposed research project. In addition to answering the questions below, the researcher is expected to append pages (and any other necessary documents) to a submission detailing the required information about the research protocol (see page 4).

1. Will the subjects in your study be **UNAWARE** that they are subjects?  Yes  No
  
2. Will information about the subjects be obtained from sources other than the subjects themselves?  Yes  No
  
3. Are you and/or members of your research team in a position of power vis-a-vis the subjects? If yes, clarify the position of power and how it will be addressed.  Yes  No
  
4. Is any inducement or coercion used to obtain the subject's participation?  Yes  No

**Participant Inducement**

All participants will be provided with a twenty-dollar (\$20.00) honorarium for their contribution and time.

5. Do subjects identify themselves by name directly, or by other means that allows you or anyone else to identify data with specific subjects? If yes, indicate how confidentiality will be maintained. What precautions are to be undertaken in storing data and in its eventual destruction/disposition.  Yes  No

**Name Identification**

Subjects will be listed by name in the researcher's data log in order to assist in the coding processes. Names will not be used in any materials for dissemination unless permission is given in writing for a specific quote to be attributed to them.

**Data Storage, Dissemination and Eventual Destruction**

The interview data collected by the researcher (names of subjects, notes, audio files and transcriptions) will be treated as confidential and stored under lock and key in a filing cabinet within the researcher's home for no less than two years after which point the data will be destroyed. Participants' names or any other personal information will not be

included in the study unless their permission is granted. Where information occurs within a session transcript that will be included in the final project report, names and other personal information will be omitted, unless such permission has been explicitly granted. Outcomes and recommendations resulting from this study will be disseminated free of charge to all interviewees upon request. The research document will also be circulated to interested school board and municipal planning agencies. If desired, subjects may request free copies of the researcher's work once complete.

6. If subjects are identifiable by name, do you intend to recruit them for future studies? If yes, indicate why this is necessary and how you plan to recruit these subjects for future studies.  Yes  No
7. Could dissemination of findings compromise confidentiality?  Yes  No
8. Does the study involve physical or emotional stress, or the subject's expectation thereof, such as might result from conditions in the study design?  Yes  No
9. Is there any threat to the personal safety of subjects?  Yes  No
10. Does the study involve subjects who are not legally or practically able to give their valid consent to participate (e.g., children, or persons with mental health problems and/or cognitive impairment)? If yes, indicate how informed consent will be obtained from subjects and those authorized to speak for subjects.  Yes  No
11. Is deception involved (i.e., will subjects be intentionally misled about the purpose of the study, their own performance, or other features of the study)?  Yes  No
12. Is there a possibility that abuse of children or persons in care might be discovered in the course of the study? If yes, current laws require that certain offenses against children and persons in care be reported to legal authorities. Indicate the provisions that have been made for complying with the law.  Yes  No

13. Does the study include the use of personal health information?  
Is there a possibility that abuse of children or persons  
The Manitoba Personal Health Information Act (PHIA) outlines  
responsibilities of researchers to ensure safeguards that  
will protect personal health information. If yes, indicate  
provisions that will be made to comply with this Act  
(see document for guidance -  
<http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/phia/index.html>).  Yes  No

In my judgment this project involves:  **minimal risk**  more than minimal risk

(Policy #1406 defines “minimal risk” as follows: “. . . that the risks of harm anticipated in the proposed research are not greater nor more likely, considering probability and magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in life, including those encountered during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.”)

**28 / 05 / 09**  
**dd | mm | yr**

\_\_\_\_\_/Robert TARULLI  
**Signature of Principal Researcher**

**Ethics Protocol Submission Form**  
**Required Information about the Research Protocol**

**1. Summary of Project**

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this study is to strengthen inter-agency planning relationships between school board and municipal planners by conducting a case study review of the Grande Prairie Community Knowledge Campus (GPCKC). The GPCKC is a multi-use school facility that was planned and developed jointly by the City of Grande Prairie, Alberta and the Grande Prairie Catholic and Public school boards. The outcomes that result from this study should serve to establish a set of guiding principles that may be used by both school board and municipal planners when contemplating similar joint ventures. Through a comprehensive consultation process with key stakeholders, this project aims to:

1. Identify the planning methodology by which the GPCKC was conceived.
2. Evaluate the collaborative planning process involved in the development of the GPCKC.
3. Measure the impact of this development on the community of Grande Prairie through indicators of lifelong learning, social capital and learning-based community development.
4. Establish a set of recommendations for future inter-agency collaborations as they relate to multi-use school facilities.

**Research Methods:**

Methods employed in this study include an extensive review of current literature related to school centred neighbourhoods as well as a document review of material related to the preliminary planning of the GPCKC. The study will also be informed through interviews with key stakeholders (those involved with the planning and design of the facility) as well as with a select number of facility users. Questions posed to these two groups will attempt to answer the following research questions:

- i. What was the intended purpose of the GPCKC?
- ii. What does the GPCKC set out to achieve?
- iii. How was the purpose of the GPCKC defined in the planning process?
- iv. How does the planned purpose of the GPCKC align with what is written in the relevant literature?
- v. Does the GPCKC achieve its purpose / function as intended?
- vi. What recommendations can be made about future multi-use school facilities / CKCs.

## **2. Research Instruments:**

Questions posed to both key stakeholder and facility user groups will be opened ended and semi-structured in order to glean sufficient information about the intended purpose and function of this facility. Interview sessions with both groups will be recorded using a digital audio device and notes will be taken manually during the interview by the researcher. A set of questions are proposed for each interview group:

Questions for Key Informant Group (Municipal and school board planners involved in the planning and design of the GPCKC)

- 1. What was the original intent of the GPCKC ?*
- 2. What types of community considerations do you take into account when planning for a new school facility?*
- 3. What role do you think your organization has in terms of building community (i.e. community development objectives)?*
- 4. What do you consider to be the most important focal point in a residential development?*
- 5. In what ways should schools be interconnected with the rest of a neighbourhood?*
- 6. How would you define a “School-centred Neighbourhood”?*
- 7. How do think that schools play a role in developing networks within the community?*
- 8. What do you see as the greatest obstacle, within you organization, facing the planning of multi-use school facilities?*
- 9. What difficulties arise from partnership agreements between stakeholders?*
- 10. What changes do you see in neighbourhoods and communities of the future in terms of the provision of school sites?*
- 11. How important is it to work collaboratively with other partner organizations? Why?*
- 12. What are some planning initiatives that you think should be incorporated into school facility planning?*

### Questions for Facility User Group:

1. *What do you think are the purposes of the GPCKC?*
2. *In your opinion, are the purposes of the GPCKC being met?*
3. *What would you say is the most important feature of the Community Knowledge Campus? Why?*
4. *How often do you use the Community Knowledge Campus?*
5. *Has the construction of the Community Knowledge Campus made it easier to take classes or to learn a new skill?*
6. *Before the construction of the Community Knowledge Campus, how often did you get together with friends?*
7. *Do you think that you have met more people since the construction of the Community Knowledge Campus?*
8. *Prior to the construction of the Community Knowledge Campus, how often did you participate in intramural sport activities?*
9. *How do you think that your involvement in social activities has changed since the construction of the Community Knowledge Campus?*
10. *Where do you get information about events in your community?*
11. *How often do you volunteer in your community?*
12. *Do you belong to any community betterment groups? For example a roadway clean-up group? You do not need to say which group or groups you belong to.*
13. *Prior to the construction of the Community Knowledge Campus, did you belong to any community betterment groups? Again, you do not need to say which group or groups you belong to.*

### **3. Study Subjects:**

The two interview groups consist of members involved with the planning and design of the GPCKC as well as a random sampling of facility users. The Key Stakeholder group will consist of municipal and school board planners, project architects and school administrators. The Facility User group will consist of adult users of the GPCKC. No students or users under the age of 18 will be interviewed.

### **Recruitment Strategies:**

The researcher will approach key stakeholders individually to invite them to participate in the study. Interviewees in this group will be selected through a scan of the planning and

design material as well as by referral from other key stakeholder participants. Initial contact will be made individually by telephone or email.

Facility users will be invited to participate by setting up a table with the lobby of the facility explaining the study objectives and setting up interview times. Interviews will be conducted in a dedicated office space within the GPCKC. Permission to use this area has been granted pending approval of the Research Ethics submission. A secondary online survey will be made available for users who are interested in participating but would not be available for a face-to-face interview during the time that the researcher will be in Grande Prairie.

#### **4. Informed Consent:**

Before each interview session, participants will be required to sign an informed consent form clearly explaining the purpose of the research, how the interview data and transcripts will be collected, kept in anonymity, securely stored and eventually destroyed.

#### **5. Deception:**

No information will be deliberately withheld from participants and there will be no misleading information about the research or its purpose. There is no deception involved in this study.

#### **6. Feedback / Debriefing:**

Participants will be given the opportunity to discuss the research project in more detail with the researcher. Opportunity will be given to participants to provide additional information or feedback. Each participant will have access to the research findings and completed thesis document upon the completion of the project at no cost.

#### **7. Risk and Benefits:**

There are no anticipated risks to participants. Participants may benefit from an increased knowledge about the impact of multi-use school facilities on the surrounding neighbourhood.

#### **8. Anonymity and Confidentiality:**

During the interview process, names, occupations and ages of the participants will be recorded and transcribed for analysis at a later date. All audio recordings and transcripts will be kept in locked drawer within the researcher's home. Names or other personal information will not be included in the final document. Quotes will not be attributed to specific interviewees unless permission by the interviewee has been explicitly granted. All information including audio recording and transcriptions will be securely stored in a locked drawer within the researcher's home for no less than two years. At the end of two years, this information will be destroyed.

#### **9. Compensation:**

All participants will be given a \$20.00 honorarium for their time and contribution. Participant will receive the honorarium immediately following the interview session however, if a participant withdraws from the study, they will not be compensated.



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## Faculty of Architecture

City Planning  
201 Russell Building  
84 Curry Place  
Winnipeg MB  
R3T 2N2  
Tel: (204) 474-6578  
Fax: (204) 474-7532

### Written Consent Form for Case Study Research, Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews

Research Project Title:

**School-Centred Neighbourhoods: An Assessment of Grande Prairie's Community Knowledge Campus**

Researcher: **Rob Tarulli**

Sponsor (if applicable): N/A

*This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.*

#### **Background to the Research**

The purpose of this study is to strengthen inter-agency planning relationships between school board and municipal planners by conducting a case study review of the Grande Prairie Community Knowledge Campus (GPCKC). The GPCKC is a multi-use school facility that was planned and developed jointly by the City of Grande Prairie, Alberta and the Grande Prairie Catholic and Public school boards. The outcomes that result from this study should serve to establish a set of guiding principles that may be used by both school board and municipal planners when contemplating similar joint ventures. Through a comprehensive consultation process with key stakeholders, this project aims to:

1. Identify the planning methodology by which the GPCKC was conceived.
2. Evaluate the collaborative planning process involved in the development of the GPCKC.
3. Measure the impact of this development on the community of Grande Prairie through indicators of lifelong learning, social capital and learning-based community development.
4. Establish a set of recommendations for future inter-agency collaborations as they relate to multi-use school facilities.

**Risk and Benefits**

There is no risk involved in your participation in this research. The data collected will help formulate recommendations for future collaborative planning initiatives of other multi-use school facilities. Please note that this interview will take approximately one hour.

**Audio-Taping**

During the interview process, names, occupations and ages of the participants will be recorded and transcribed to assist in the analysis process at a later date. Names or other personal information will not be included in the final document. Quotes will not be attributed to specific interviewees unless permission by the interviewee has been explicitly granted. All information including audio recording and transcriptions will be securely stored in a locked drawer within the researcher's home for no less than two years. At the end of two years, this information will be destroyed.

**Data Storage, Dissemination and Eventual Destruction**

The interview data collected by the researcher (names of subjects, notes, audio files and transcriptions) will be treated as confidential and stored under lock and key in a filing cabinet within the researcher's home for no less than two years after which point the data will be destroyed. Your name or any other personal information will not be included in any publicly disseminated materials arising from the study unless such permission has been explicitly granted.

Outcomes and recommendations resulting from this study will be disseminated free of charge to you upon request. The research document will also be circulated to interested school board and municipal planning agencies. If desired, you may request free copies of the researcher's work once complete.

**Remuneration**

In appreciation for your time and contribution to this study, you will receive an honorarium of twenty dollars (\$20.00) upon the completion of this interview session.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

---

Name of Participant

---

Signature of Participant

---

Name of Researcher

Date

---

Signature of Researcher

Date

### **Contact Information**

Name of Researcher: **Rob Tarulli, B.Ed.**

Address: **XXXX – XX Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, XXX XXX**

Tel: **1-780-XXX-XXXX**

E-mail: **XXXXXXX@mac.com**

Name of Researcher's Advisor: **Dr. Richard Milgrom, B.E.S., M.Arch., Ph.D.,  
M.C.I.P.**

Address: **317 Russell Building, Department of City Planning, University of Manitoba  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3T 2N2**

Tel: **1-204-474-6868**

E-mail: **milgrom@cc.umanitoba.ca**

This research has been approved by the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB). If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail [margaret\\_bowman@umanitoba.ca](mailto:margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca). A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Thank you for participating in this project. Your cooperation and insights are very valuable, and are greatly appreciated.

## 10.6 Appendix F – Ethics Approval



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OFFICE OF RESEARCH  
SERVICES  
Office of the Vice-President (Research)

CTC Building  
208 - 194 Dafoe Road  
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2  
Fax (204) 269-7173  
[www.umanitoba.ca/research](http://www.umanitoba.ca/research)

### APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

26 June 2009

**TO:** Robert Tarulli (Advisor R. Milgrom)  
Principal Investigator

**FROM:** Wayne Taylor, Chair   
Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB)

**Re:** Protocol #J2009:082  
**“School Centred Neighbourhoods: An Assessment of Grande Prairie’s Community Knowledge Campus”**

Please be advised that your above-referenced protocol has received human ethics approval by the **Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board**, which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement. This approval is valid for one year only.

Any significant changes of the protocol and/or informed consent form should be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation of such changes.

**Please note:**

- if you have funds pending human ethics approval, the auditor requires that you submit a copy of this Approval Certificate to Eveline Saurette in the Office of Research Services, (e-mail [eveline\\_saurette@umanitoba.ca](mailto:eveline_saurette@umanitoba.ca), or fax 261-0325), including the Sponsor name, before your account can be opened.
- if you have received multi-year funding for this research, responsibility lies with you to apply for and obtain Renewal Approval at the expiry of the initial one-year approval; otherwise the account will be locked.

**The Research Ethics Board requests a final report for your study (available at: [http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/ethics/ors\\_ethics\\_human\\_REB\\_forms\\_guidelines.html](http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/ethics/ors_ethics_human_REB_forms_guidelines.html)) in order to be in compliance with Tri-Council Guidelines.**