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COVER PAGE

Innovation Study Title **P4 Enhanced Public Partnership Practice: West Lethbridge Centre Project**

Category Community Relationships

Jurisdiction Name City of Lethbridge

City/County Manager Mr. Garth Sherwin

Population 87,882

Submit Innovation Study for an Alliance Innovation Award Yes [X] No []
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ALLIANCE FOR INNOVATION INNOVATIVE STUDY APPLICATION FOR 2012

Date	August 4, 2011
Name of Innovative Practice	P4 Enhanced Public Partnership Practice: West Lethbridge Centre Project
Innovative Study Category	Community Relationships
Name of Municipality	City of Lethbridge
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A. SYNOPSIS

1. INTENT OF PRACTICE DEVELOPED

The practice developed is a rigorous Public/Public/Public Partnering (P4) process sufficient to deliver a project with four partners and a \$62 million multi-use facility. The intent was threefold:

1. **To create a platform for partnership and collaboration to aid in decision making on community projects**
2. **To construct the West Lethbridge Centre**
3. **To meet the fast growing community needs in West Lethbridge with this project**

West Lethbridge is a rapidly growing thriving community currently living with limited services. The project - **West Lethbridge Centre** - is a collaborative effort between the City of Lethbridge, Lethbridge Public Library Board and the Public and Private School Boards. This project is the culmination of dedicated parties over a ten year span resulting in the construction of a multi-use site consisting of the **planning & construction of the Crossings Neighborhood sufficient to support a 45 acre site to locate the new west branch library, two high schools, sports fields and parkland.**

Although the partnership was established on long standing good will through existing joint use of community and school facilities, it was identified early that this project was far too complex to be established on goodwill alone.

The partnering process began a foundation of reciprocal obligations of good faith, loyalty, and duty of full disclosure with respect to all matters in the joint project development. Funding at the time was difficult to access for schools and School District #51 sought to explore a P3 arrangement (Public/Private Partnership). This concept was quickly abandoned for a more community based approach (Public/Public/Public Partnership) The P4 Partnership practice emerged.

In 2005 the Government of Alberta approved this partnership practice thus creating a pledge of dollars but no neighborhood. Initiating a community core for West Lethbridge and developing a campus of a library, two high schools and sports fields became critical to the success for future development of commercial, residential and municipal facilities.

As all four parties initiated their partnership, they developed a charter that put forth a standard of open communication, respect, and shared vision. These values and a shared goal became known amongst the team as the *spirit of partnership*. Through the development of a successful, cooperative alliance the partners were able to see this project through to completion.

2. PRACTICE/PROJECT TIMELINES

The P4 Partnership Practice started with a desire to build a public high school on the west side of Lethbridge based on the results of a **needs assessment in 2000**. A **second study in 2003** by the private school board resulted in the need for a second City high school within the Holy Spirit Roman Catholic School Division. At the same time, City Council asked the Library board to consider adding a full service library to the project.

In **2005, the Government of Alberta approved funding for the high school complex** and in consultation with the City of Lethbridge a new site and neighbourhood plan was approved a year later.

By **2006 the design process was underway** and a **ground breaking was held in October 2007**. On **August 31, 2010 the facility opened to the public**.

As indicated the process evolved over ten years and even though the key stakeholders remained true to the partnership charter, many faces changed over time.

CHINOOK HIGH SCHOOL, THE WEST CAMPUS OF CATHOLIC CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL AND THE WEST SIDE BRANCH OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY PROMISE TO PROVIDE AN ULTRA-MODERN LEARNING EXPERIENCE

21st century school

although it will have a capacity of 1,100 student spaces, the initial enrolment will likely be between 700 and 800 with between 35 and 45 teachers. Litun said it's too soon to say if there'll be an overall increase in staffing.

"I think it would be foolish for me to say there won't be an increase in staffing but that will be determined when we have an inkling of how many students will be at each of the schools," he said.

Students in the public system can choose which high school they want to

Work continues to progress on the westside's biggest development since the University of Lethbridge broke ground over 40 years ago. The new West Lethbridge Centre will be home to Chinook High School, Catholic Central High's west campus and a public library. These photos, taken earlier this spring, show just a sampling of the facility which will contain a 1,325 square metre gymnasium which will allow for two basketball courts or three volleyball courts and bleachers to seat about 1,100 people. The gym, stage, dance and new media centre will have a shock-absorbing sprung floor.

Herald photos by Ian Martens



3. OUTCOMES TO DATE

- **Opening of the new West Lethbridge Centre** campus took place in August 2010.
- The **creation of the P4 Partnership Practice** including processes and templates.
- **Community consultation** was important to all partners as they agreed it was key to the project's success. Each partner undertook their own stakeholder analysis and consultation process. The City of Lethbridge new neighbourhood and green field site worked with all three partners to meet their needs as the site was established. The Library undertook an extensive consultation engaging their stakeholders in defining the library needs for the region and both School Districts held ongoing community engagement opportunities to ensure design elements of both schools met the needs identified.
- The partners continue to operate under the guiding principles of the **Construction Partnership Agreement** as they dealt with snow removal issues in the winter season and landscaping challenges in the spring. Through a spirit of collaboration and willingness to openly communicate global issues have been minimized and resolved.
- Both **high schools have seen an increase in student numbers** from initially forecasted and are seeing high usage of the recreational facilities attached.
- The **library boasts an increase in memberships** sold to high school age youth.
- All four parties have received **countless positive comments from the Community** in praise of the facility.
- The **neighbourhood development is starting to take shape** and see new growth. A new ice arena facility is scheduled to start construction in the coming year directly across from the West Lethbridge Centre campus attracting more youth and families to this neighbourhood.

4. COSTS AND SAVINGS

For the purpose of this submission we have focused on the partnering framework practice developed and therefore budget implications are based mostly on staff resources:

- The partnering charter was facilitated by staff at no fixed cost
- Legal costs associated to the practice and project were shared by each partner
- Ongoing and operational costs related to the project were borne by each respective partner and the facility or land constructed
- Each partner, at a minimum, contributed two members to each of the two committees (met monthly – average 2 hours/meeting from 2006-2010)
- The City of Lethbridge provided committee representation, project coordinator for construction, communications & event planning and administrative support

In keeping with the partnership charter, shared resources were agreed to by each party. A collaborative Microsoft share point extranet site was created and maintained by the City of Lethbridge project coordinator. This site allowed for sharing of information related to the project in one location with access from all four partners. Documents included such documents as site plans, designs, neighborhood planning, and construction plans.



Herald photo by David Rossite

Chinook High School public school library construction zone.

All's well on western front

5. INNOVATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

In creating the practice the partners started by articulating their individual requirements. This led to a partnering charter exercise to move from individual goals to the collective, through collaboration and defining of the goal. It described the desired outcome and how the partners planned to work together to meet that goal. This led to the project partnership charter:

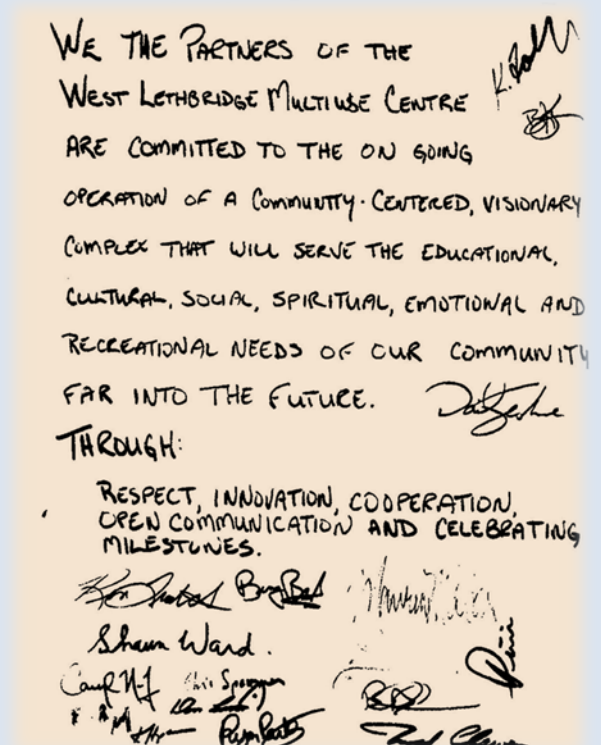
“We the partners of the West Lethbridge Multi-use Centre are committed to the ongoing operation of a community centered, visionary complex that will serve the educational, cultural, social, spiritual, emotional and recreational needs of our community far into the future. Through respect, innovation, cooperation, open communication and celebration of milestones.”

The next step was to make the charter operational. This was a combination of:

- **Terms of Reference** created; allocating work, roles & responsibilities
- **Steering Committee** struck; political will and oversight
- **Management Committee** struck; completion of the work

The legal framework of the joint venture came from creating the construction partnership agreement. This agreement purposed that the parties agreed to contribute money, property, skill and resources towards the completion of West Lethbridge Centre and the fulfillment of their stated common purpose. This was to be carried out on the foundation of reciprocal obligations of good faith and loyalty, and full disclosure.

What the parties ended up with was not a partnership but a joint venture agreement between four partners.



WE THE PARTNERS OF THE
WEST LETHBRIDGE MULTIUSE CENTRE
ARE COMMITTED TO THE ON GOING
OPERATION OF A COMMUNITY-CENTERED, VISIONARY
COMPLEX THAT WILL SERVE THE EDUCATIONAL,
CULTURAL, SOCIAL, SPIRITUAL, EMOTIONAL AND
RECREATIONAL NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY
FAR INTO THE FUTURE.
THROUGH:
RESPECT, INNOVATION, COOPERATION,
OPEN COMMUNICATION AND CELEBRATING
MILESTONES.

Signatures: Shawn Ward, Chris Spurgeon, Paul Clarke, and others.

6. OBSTACLES AND RESULTS ACHIEVED

- **CONSTRUCTION OF WEST LETHBRIDGE CENTRE**

Creation of two high schools, a new Library Branch, and 42 acres of prime parkland & sports fields on one recreation and learning campus. This project meets the service and health needs of the rapidly growing West Lethbridge Community



- **POLICY CHANGE**

The West Lethbridge Centre project brought about a change in the land use bylaw. This was the first of a new 'innovative zone bylaw' for land use planning and has allowed greater opportunities in developing the site for future commercial, residential and municipal use.

- **REPORTING**

Annual project reports were created, shared and agreed to by each partner. These reports were shared with the partners respective Boards and/or Council, along with budget reporting and financial investments from other funders. A final project report celebrating the success of the partnership and project was shared at the Grand Opening with the general public.

- **GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP**

A partnership framework for four public entities is now in place for future use.

LEARNINGS

- This collaborative approach reinforced to our community that partnership does work. **Partnerships that have clear roles and responsibilities ensure projects goals are achieved.**
- With the West Lethbridge Centre project, the partners experienced a challenge as common servicing to a shared title was not possible. As a fix, the **school site was subdivided into separate titles with single servicing to meet the condominium agreement's purpose.**
- The partners agree that this project is an example of how government, education and private industry can collaborate for a greater goal. **Communication and remaining true to an agreed upon partnership charter is critical to success.**



B. INNOVATION STUDY COMPONENTS

1. INNOVATION/CREATIVITY

In the beginning there were virtually no blueprints to go off of. The partners looked at past successes in developing partnership including the long standing Joint Use Agreement between the City of Lethbridge, School District #51 and Holy Spirit Roman Catholic School District #4. This agreement was struck in good faith in the 1950's and made legally binding in the 1970's. It is a strong platform from which the P4 Practice flourished.

Building upon the agreement, the parties used the Province of Alberta foundation of partnering process which supports the movement of individual goals to collective goal setting. In addition, the West Lethbridge Centre project's future operational needs will be maintained through a newly formed condominium agreement. In this case, legal advice was sought from experts in this area as well as joint venturing to ensure the interests of the individual parties were protected in their pursuit of the collective goal.

The process was somewhat evolutionary and successful due to the combined varied experience and expertise brought to the table by each partner. The City of Lethbridge played a key role in the development of the process through facilitation, legal advice, construction, experience, communication/public relations advice and project oversight. Although the City of Lethbridge provided leadership, all decisions were collaborative in keeping with the project charter.

2. OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

As outlined early in this report, the West Lethbridge Centre project yielded varying significant outcomes. As this was the first experience in creating a public/public/public partnership (P4) with a project of this magnitude and cost, key steps in the process were taken to share information. Maintaining the collaborative spirit was done through:

- 1. Initialization of the Partnership Charter**
- 2. Terms of Reference** created and agreed to
- 3. Steering and Management Committees** struck and roles and responsibilities confirmed
- 4. Construction Partnership Agreement** created; legally binding joint venture agreement wherein all parties agreed to contribute certain money, property, skill and resources towards the completion of the West Lethbridge Centre and the fulfillment of their stated common purpose.

Regular Steering and Management Committees meetings were held for project updates. Issues, challenges, opportunities for improvement and decisions were made as a collective. With the construction and grand opening of the new West Lethbridge Centre complete, the partnership has evolved into a condominium agreement between all parties confirming the roles and responsibilities at the West Lethbridge Centre multi-use facility.

3. APPLICABLE RESULTS AND REAL WORLD PRACTICALITY

The main benefit of the P4 Practice creation in Lethbridge is that the foundation for Public/Public/Public Partnership projects has been set. A roadmap now exists for future partnering to assist in building a better community.

This foundation allows for a starting point with the following benefits:

- **Reduces research time**
- **Reduces need to reinvent the wheel**
- **Provides guidance**
- **Allows groups to get to the same place quickly**
- **Saves time and resources**
- **Builds trust in the process**
- **Provides templates for:**
 - Agreements
 - Terms of Reference
 - Committee Roles & Responsibilities
 - Reporting
 - Project Management requirements
 - Technology Options (i.e.: Sharepoint Extranet)
 - Communication requirements (i.e.: Event planning, media news releases, open house/tours)

The practical applications (processes and templates) created through this practice have been made available to other City of Lethbridge employees to assist with project success. The City is happy to share any applications for real world practical use with other municipalities.

4. INNOVATION STUDY PRESENTATION

The City of Lethbridge presentation will include:

PRESENTATION	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power point presentation by project team members • Five (5) minute video on City of Lethbridge partnerships • Handout material on the study and the partnering project

C. SUMMARY

The key goal of the P4 Practice remains embedded in the Partnership Charter:

“We the partners of the West Lethbridge Multi-use Centre are committed to the ongoing operation of a community-centered, visionary complex that will serve the educational, cultural, social, spiritual, emotional and recreational needs of our community far into the future. Through respect, innovation, cooperation, open communication and celebrating milestones. “

As partners we celebrate meeting our partnership goal and continue to work diligently as an operations committee to maintain this successful practice.

Success in the practice was identified to be from:

- Ongoing communication
- Trust and welcoming of newcomers with an agreement orientation
- Holding each other accountable in a professional and respectful manner

The desire to create something as large as the \$62 million West Lethbridge Centre project was held by all as a priority. The group just needed a way to get there! The P4 practice laid this path.

