

## The William Griesbach Training Facility - City Analysis

### Purpose of Report

This report is intended to provide information on the William Griesbach Training Centre (Griesbach facility), currently owned and managed by the Canada Lands Company, as potential exists for the City of Edmonton to acquire the land and building site upon Edmonton Police Service's departure from the facility. This report has been developed to help inform decision making about the building's future.

### Background

The William Griesbach Training Facility is located at 14310 109 Street, within the boundaries of the original Canadian Forces Base Edmonton. The base was established in the 1950s and was closed in 2000. In 2002, the land was transferred to the Canada Lands Company who began redeveloping the entire site as a modern residential neighbourhood with new infrastructure and housing. The broader Griesbach neighbourhood redevelopment is not yet fully complete as housing units continue to be built. Commercial development is also not yet fully established. The training facility was originally constructed in 1958 and used as a gymnasium by the military personnel based at Griesbach.

Since 2006, the Edmonton Police Service has leased the facility, including all amenities within the space, for their training needs. Canada Lands Company has indicated that the existing lease will expire in October 2019. The Edmonton Police Service is required to give six months notice of their departure from this space to the new Edmonton Police Service Northwest Campus. As of October 2019, the Edmonton Police Service has not provided Canada Lands Company with this notice, as they are forecast to move into their new space in the first half of 2020.

### Analysis Development

To complete this report, the following work was completed:

- research and analysis of demographics in the neighbourhood
- stakeholder engagement with the current property owner and two organizations interested in the opportunity. Administration engaged with these stakeholders in September and October 2019 to better understand how they could utilize the facility to address their programming needs. Consultation also occurred with Canada Lands who graciously provided maps and other key information.
- analysis of available planning documentation, including:
  - 2016 Municipal Census
  - Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan (2015)
  - Facility Condition Assessment Report (2019)

- Hazardous Materials Survey (2005)
- Canada Lands planning documents (2019)
- interview and/or contact with key Administration personnel (February and May 2019)

### **The Building**

According to Canada Lands Company data, the Griesbach facility has always been used as a gymnasium and athletic facility. The building and adjacent parking lot are estimated at 3,550 square metres. The building is 3,238 square metres and currently accommodates the many training needs, with amenities including:

- gymnasium (1,536 square metres)
- change rooms and showers
- seven offices
- two classrooms
- staff lockers
- weight training area
- small mechanical room
- kitchen
- vestibule and entry foyer
- parking lot

Current replacement value for the 61-year old building has not yet been calculated. Given the building's age and significance to the military history of Edmonton, it could be designated a Municipal Historic Resource, if desired by City Council.

### **Griesbach Neighbourhood**

In March 2002, City Council approved the Griesbach Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan. The neighbourhood began redeveloping as a non-military residential community in the early 2000s, and development is still currently underway, with staged development of new homes continuing through to 2035.<sup>1</sup> According to the plan, most of the planned community is zoned as Low Density Residential with Minor Row Housing, with Medium Density Residential zoning occupying much of the rest of the overall footprint. One school site and a central park have been incorporated into the plan, as well as a waterway with a parallel walkway system. The Griesbach facility sits on land currently zoned as Multi-Use Family Residential and is adjacent to a planned school site. If the City were to purchase the property and decide to use it either for a recreation facility or a community hub, the land would require rezoning.

The Griesbach neighbourhood is surrounded by residential neighbourhoods and is connected with major arterial roads. The focus for neighbourhood

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Canada Lands

redevelopment was to create a well-planned community that integrated existing tree stands and vegetation, provided for a range of housing types, established a high-quality public area, and ensured a unique urban experience through the development of a town square, parks, and community amenities.

The internal roadway network focuses on a large central community park. The surrounding residential area is primarily single-detached housing with ground-oriented multiple-unit housing and apartments in locations with good access to major roads and amenities. A commercial village centre is located at the key transportation node at the southeast corner. Rental units are situated in the northeast corner of the community, with approximately 2,000 people situated in this market affordable housing. A potential mixed-use business campus has also been designated in the southwest corner. Two LRT stations are planned along Castle Downs Road immediately west of the Griesbach community as part of the future Metro Line Northwest, and six bus stops currently line this road. The closest planned LRT stop and existing bus station at the corner of Castle Downs Road and Ad Astra Boulevard is approximately 700 metres from the facility. As noted, the facility footprint also includes a gravel parking lot of considerable size.

### **Community Demographics**

The 2016 Municipal Census indicates a population in the neighbourhood of 4,714. As a comparison, Beaumaris and Lorelei, the neighbourhoods to the north, have a population of 4,398 and 4,134 respectively in a similar geographic area. Similarly, neighbourhoods to the east (Northmount and Evansdale) have populations of 3,192 and 5,804, respectively. The Canada Lands Company projects up to 13,000 people and more than 4500 housing units when fully developed by 2035 (it is currently about 65% built out).

The current Edmonton Public School kindergarten to grade 9 school in the neighbourhood (Major-General Griesbach School) is experiencing enrollment pressure due to increasing population in the surrounding areas. Edmonton Catholic Schools also owns a site within the neighbourhood that is designated for an elementary school, as identified in its capital plan. Edmonton Catholic Schools has also identified a high school in the Castle Downs/Dunluce area, to the northwest of Griesbach, as a priority in their capital plan. As new schools are constructed in the area, they would add additional gym and meeting space to the current inventory. Future school construction will be directed through provincial funding and school board priorities.

### **Stakeholder Engagement**

Over the months of August and September 2019, three suggested organizations were engaged through an interview process designed to better understand their

perspectives and potential requirements for the facility (Canada Lands Company, the Griesbach Community League, and ABC Head Start).

Highlights include:

- All parties indicated a desire to partner with the City in the reimagining of the Griesbach facility
- Both the Griesbach Community League and ABC Head Start indicated a desire for some of the space and indicated a need for additional partners for more efficient use of the existing spaces in the facility
- These partners also indicated the need for permanent space to meet programming needs

#### Canada Lands Company

The Canada Lands Company is the current owner of the Griesbach facility and the land on which it is situated. They have maintained the site for approximately 15 years and currently lease the facility to the Edmonton Police Service. Edmonton Police Service has indicated that they intend to vacate the Griesbach facility to move into its new Northwest Campus. The date of departure remains unknown at this point and is contingent upon completion of the new facility. Canada Lands Company indicated that the lease agreement requires that the Edmonton Police Service provide six months advance notice of their move. The Edmonton Police Service currently pays an annual rent of \$250,000 to the Canada Lands Company, and approximately \$160,000 in additional operating costs.

The Canada Lands Company has done some work to the facility over the last decade, including new water, gas and phone services. The Canada Lands Company has indicated that if the Griesbach facility is not sold to another organization, they will tear it down and develop new multi-use family housing in its footprint.

Prior to the Edmonton Police Service's use of the facility, the gym and other amenities were rented out to various groups. Special Olympics Canada currently also uses the gymnasium for some of its events.

Canada Lands has indicated they require a decision from the City by their fiscal year-end of March 31, 2020.

#### Griesbach Community League

On September 3, 2019, Administration met with the president of the Griesbach Community League, regarding the league's interest in the facility. They currently desire consistent meeting and programming space, particularly in the cooler months. As they do not currently have a permanent space, their programming is restricted to outdoor events.

Members of the league have had an opportunity to tour the facility and believe that it is more space than they require. Classroom space was also identified as an asset to possible future programming. The gym and classrooms in the Griesbach facility would give the league a permanent space to develop and implement community programs. The league also saw benefit in the permanent office and administrative space. The league could also use community space, though it would only be required 3 to 4 nights per month. The facility offers the league a space to book regular community activities and one-off events. As the league has not had an opportunity to deliver consistent programming, they do not know the number of residents possibly benefiting from the league's community programs.

The league president indicated that they would welcome other organizations utilizing available space, in a community hub format, designed to serve local residents. However, they did indicate that challenges would surface if any one particular organization dominated one space regularly (e.g. a sports group requiring the large gymnasium every day). Given this, the president indicated the most preferred partnership model is one that sees their occupancy as a tenant and partner. The league is willing to work with other interested groups to develop a model that works best for all and would work to secure grants from other orders of government to assist with any required operating and/or capital funding needs. If the facility was bought by the City, the league indicated they could move into the spaces quickly.

#### ABC Head Start Society

On September 20, 2019, Administration met with the ABC Head Start Society, who have expressed interest in the proposed transition of the Griesbach facility. ABC Head Start is a comprehensive early learning, family support and community connection program for low-income families. Since its founding in the mid 1980's, ABC Head Start focussed on preschool aged children and has recently broadened its scope to serve families across the entire city. It now assists approximately 1,000 children across Edmonton. In recent years, 85% of their clients are immigrants and refugees from 72 different countries, speaking 56 different languages.

Until several years ago, all of the organization's programs operated in schools, through a partnership with Edmonton Public Schools and Edmonton Catholic Schools. Schools were viewed as community hubs and could provide a centralized location that was easily recognized and understood by all families including new immigrants and refugees. While this partnership has worked to some degree, spatial challenges for ABC Head Start remain. As school boards renovate or close schools (particularly in mature communities), ABC Head Start is impacted as they lack a consistent location for the delivery of programs and

services. This means their programs are often on the move, requiring ABC Head Start to forge new relationships with a new school and community. Given this, ABC Head Start identified the long-term requirement for a more permanent location for their programs as their biggest current priority.

ABC Head Start's central offices are currently located at the Jerry Forbes Centre for Community Spirit. While this space has provided for economies of scale with other non-profit organizations, the centre lacks programming space. As such, ABC Head Start is looking for permanent community-based locations, such as that offered by the Griesbach facility.

The Executive Director of ABC Head Start noted that the organization's best, most successful programs are collaborative, where they are able to leverage the talents and resources of many in a collective way. As such, the executive director identified a preferred model that involved other organizations utilizing the spaces in the facility. This hub model would allow ABC Head Start to partner and collaborate, as well as ensure the best delivery of their wrap-around model serving children and families, involving social workers, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, behaviour specialists and others. This model requires secured office/meeting space for private conversations, as well as meeting/classroom spaces for broader engagements and family learning opportunities (such as good parenting, income tax preparation, finding a doctor in Edmonton, and financial literacy). The executive director also indicated that the ideal space would include a kitchen for meal preparation, as the promise of food invites more people to their programming options.

ABC Head Start noted that the Griesbach facility would not be sufficient space as a central hub for all of its programming, but that they could use some space in the facility for programming for communities in north Edmonton. It would also give ABC Head Start some sense of security and longevity, as they currently operate from schools in this area. Further, its central location and proximity to existing and future public transit stops means the facility would be easily accessible to clients.

The executive director indicated that they would be willing to work with partners in a shared-cost model to reduce net operating costs for all. As programs are operated during regular school hours, ABC Head Start requires access to classroom, meeting, office and kitchen space during these hours. Specific needs identified include:

- minimum of two classrooms during regular school hours
- footprint of approximately 465 square metres in total: classrooms, meeting, and recreation spaces

When not in use by ABC Head Start, the spaces could be used by a partner (or partners). While some alterations would be required to meet its programming needs, ABC Head Start could move in quickly. A long-term lease is preferred and ABC Head Start would then match its programming to the needs of the surrounding communities.

In August 2019, City Council approved a Community Facility Partner Capital - Planning Grant for ABC Head Start, as part of the North West Community Hub Building Committee, for planning of a community hub to help meet its goal of creating a shared community facility which encourages connections between residents, community service providers, businesses and groups within northwest Edmonton.

### **Community Usage of Similar Spaces**

#### Gymnasium Use

There are 29 schools within five kilometres of the Griesbach facility, as well as the Castle Downs YMCA and two leisure centres to the south of Griesbach (Grand Trunk and O'Leary). The City of Edmonton has a joint use agreement in place with Edmonton Public Schools, Edmonton Catholic Schools and the Francophone School Board. Under these agreements, the schools provide the City with access to the school gymnasium outside of school hours and the City then rents the space to different users (e.g. minor sports teams, clubs).

The Major-General Griesbach School gym was rented for 423 hours in 2018. The availability of the gym space through the joint use agreement was set at 531 hours for the year. This indicates a utilization rate of 79.7%. The other 28 schools have a utilization rate of 53%.

Appendix A captures the latest data highlighting current gym usage for schools within an approximate five kilometre radius of the Griesbach facility.

#### Meeting Space Use

Meeting space is used by a variety of community groups and organizations. In addition to meeting space that may be available at schools, community league halls and recreation/leisure centres also offer meeting room space for these groups. The Edmonton Public Library at the Castle Downs branch also has a meeting room available for public use, although these hours are not measured by the City.

Administration completed an analysis of the meeting space utilization in City recreation facilities within the neighbourhood and surrounding area. The review looked at the community rooms and viewing/party rooms in Grand Trunk and



O'Leary Leisure Centres and showed that the average utilization was approximately 8.8%.

**Griesbach Facility - Facility Condition Assessment Report 2019**

In August 2019, Administration conducted a facility condition assessment of the Griesbach facility.

The review of the site and facility was based on a visual walk-through of the visible and accessible components of the property, building and related structures (including the roof, exterior wall finishes, stairs, plumbing, and heating systems) to check their condition and to identify physical deficiencies. This assessment did not include an intrusive investigation of wall assemblies, ceiling cavities, or any other enclosures/assemblies. No physical tests were conducted and no samples of building materials were collected to substantiate observations made or for any other reason.

A detailed evaluation of the property's compliance with national and/or provincial building codes and fire codes was not part of the scope of this assessment. The existing building and related structures are assumed to have been reviewed and approved by local authorities at the time of construction and/or subsequent renovation(s). No legal surveys, soil tests, environmental assessments, geotechnical assessments, detailed barrier-free compliance assessments, seismic assessments, or detailed engineering calculations have been made. However, issues and concerns related to safety have been highlighted.

The assessment rated much of the building structure as Fair. This assessment included the floor, roof, wall foundation, interior construction, stairs and ramps, interior finishes and furnishings, and external site improvements. This rating is calculated based on indication of some deterioration or defects to the amenities, though their function remains adequate. Each component is marginally acceptable for its intended use but deteriorating conditions will need to be addressed. Similarly, the mechanical systems - including plumbing, heating, ventilation and air conditioning, and fire protection - were also rated as Fair. Newer electrical systems within the facility were rated as Good.

As part of the assessment, Administration estimated costs for long-term maintenance requirements ranging from immediate to 6 to 10 years. These costs include energy retrofits, design costs, project management fees, construction management fees and general contingencies.



Costs for improving current building and mechanical conditions are as follows:

<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
2019-2022	\$11,300,000
2023-2024	\$2,600,000
2025-2029	\$98,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$13,998,000</b>

### **Hazard Assessment**

In June 2005, Administration commissioned a hazardous materials survey of the facility. The survey identified that asbestos was found in pipe-fittings, pipe insulation, duct barging, and floor tiles in several locations throughout the building, including mechanical rooms and the gymnasium area.

No subsequent hazardous assessments can be found. Based on their conclusions, the consultant that conducted the 2005 survey recommended a number of actions, including the abatement of all identified asbestos-containing materials according to the asbestos abatement procedures as outlined by the Government of Alberta. At this time, the extent to which this removal occurred is not known. Canada Lands Company has indicated that when Edmonton Police Service moved into the building 15 years ago, a significant amount of asbestos abatement took place. However, not all of it was removed and, as such, Canada Lands Company believes another hazard assessment is required to determine exact amounts of asbestos remaining.

### **Costs for Conversion of the Space**

Based on their initial site visits, the Griesbach Community League and ABC Head Start Society believe they could make use of the space provided some areas were modified to meet their unique programming needs. Costs for conversion of existing spaces and rooms are contingent upon their use and will need to be determined upon further consultation with possible partners. At this time, possible additional operating costs for renovations remain unknown.

**Operating Costs**

Annual operating costs for the Griesbach Facility  
(provided by Edmonton Police Service, May 2019)

<b>Cost Element</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
Power	\$32,080	\$33,316
Water	\$7,562	\$8,015
Sewer	\$3,529	\$3,680
Waste	\$2,978	\$2,931
Natural gas	\$13,233	\$16,401
Custodial	\$55,500	\$57,500
Building Maintenance	\$47,021	\$39,312
<b>Operating Costs Subtotal</b>	<b>\$161,903</b>	<b>\$161,155</b>
Rent	\$250,000	\$250,000
Taxes and Landlord Maintenance	\$54,053	\$142,985
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>\$465,956</b>	<b>\$554,140</b>

**Policy Alignment**The Approach to Community Recreation Facility Planning in Edmonton

Much of the Griesbach facility consists of a large gymnasium and related amenities (washrooms, fitness area). The Griesbach Community League and ABC Head Start Society indicated they could use the gym in some capacity. The Approach to Community Recreation Facility Planning in Edmonton provides guidance regarding the provision and allocation of recreation amenities within neighbourhoods.

The Approach outlines a basic commitment to residents in two parts:

- A. a commitment to indoor recreation places
- B. a commitment to outdoor recreation places.

*Part A: Indoor Recreation*

Every resident will have a place to connect, be active, and participate in recreation indoors (e.g. on ice, in water, or gymnasiums and fitness centres) within 5 kilometres of their residence. A number of similar amenities are found within 5 kilometres of the Griesbach facility, including:

- multi-purpose spaces in several community leagues
- gymnasiums in 29 schools
- three indoor facilities: Castle Downs YMCA, Grand Trunk Leisure Centre, and O'Leary Leisure Centre

### *Part B: Outdoor Recreation*

Every resident will have a place to connect, be active and participate in recreation outdoors (e.g. sports fields) within 400 metres of their residence. The City is meeting this element of the basic commitment through a number of outdoor recreation amenities either existing or planned, including:

- outdoor soccer fields
- outdoor ball diamonds
- Patricia Park, Roundel Lake, Perron-Berger Park, Maple Leaf Park playground, and RCAF Park
- Griesbach community garden

### Community Hubs Council Initiative

Through the Community Hubs Council Initiative, Administration's preliminary research suggests that community hubs are useful models that optimize the use of public assets, are designed to encourage public social gatherings, and provide spaces for people to congregate and connect in both planned and incidental ways. Broadly defined, community hubs are public spaces that strengthen citizens' sense of place and connectedness. According to the initiative, a community hub or site is an accessible and inclusive public amenity such as a multi-purpose building, vibrant community space or place such as a plaza, green space, or street. The Griesbach facility would require structural and operational changes to meet the criteria identified for community hubs.

### **Preliminary Programming Ideas**

The Griesbach Community League and ABC Head Start Society provided several suggestions for possible programming of the amenities within the Griesbach facility, although alterations of some existing spaces would first be required. The current washrooms, for instance, would require some modifications to become more child-friendly if an organization serving children was to occupy the space (e.g. toilets and sinks designed to accommodate children). Neither organization indicated a need for the existing workout room, although both expressed interest in the gymnasium. Retrofit of the facility would depend on the types of programming planned.

The direction provided by both the Approach to Community Recreation Facility Planning in Edmonton and the Community Hubs Council Initiative suggest a need for a community hub type amenity (with related programming) over recreation space. This sentiment was also expressed by both parties consulted.

**Other Partners**

Other organizations may have similar needs for permanent classroom, meeting, recreation, and kitchen space, although broader engagement with these organizations in north Edmonton would be required to confirm their unique programming needs. Partner readiness would also need to be assessed to understand the ability of potential tenants to manage the building and complete the lease payments.

**Appendix A**

Gym usage for schools within an approximate five kilometre radius of the Griesbach facility for the 2018/2019 school year.

School Name (District, Grades)	Neighbourhood	Gym Availability (hours)	Rental Hours Used	Gym Utilization (Estimated)
Major-General Griesbach School (Public, K-9)	Griesbach	531	423	79.7%
Dunluce School (Public, K-6)	Dunluce	162	19	11.7%
Mary Butterworth School (Public, 7-9)	Lorelei	168	133.5	79.5%
Lorelei School (Public, K-6)	Lorelei	256	86	33.6%
École Bishop Savaryn Catholic Elementary (Catholic, K-6)	Lorelei	203	179.5	88.4%
Florence Hallock School (Public, K-9)	Belle Rive	184	163	88.6%
Evansdale School (Public, K-6)	Evansdale	500	194	38.8%
Northmount School (Public, K-6)	Northmount	156	74	47.4%
Dickinsfield School (Public, 7-9)	Northmount	273	170	62.3%
Glengarry School (Public, K-6)	Glengarry	340	149.5	44.0%
St. Cecilia Catholic Junior High School (Catholic, 7-9)	Glengarry	828	365	44.1%
Archbishop O'Leary High School (Catholic, 10-12)	Glengarry	252	285	113.1%
Queen Elizabeth School (Public, 10-12)	Killarney	592*	258.5	43.7%

## Attachment 1

Killarney School (Public, 7-9)	Killarney	355	176	49.6%
St. Matthew Catholic Elementary School (Catholic, K-6)	Killarney	401	217.5	54.2%
Lauderdale School (Public, K-6)	Lauderdale	438	41.5	9.5%
École Père-Lacombe (Francophone, K-6)	Lauderdale	1,088	560	51.5%
Rosslyn School (Public, 7-9)	Rosslyn	592	210	35.5%
Scott Robertson School (Public, K-6)	Rosslyn	333	172	51.7%
Calder School (Public, K-6)	Calder	343	160	46.6%
Kensington School (Public, K-7)	Kensington	190	182.5	96.1%
Katherine Therrien Catholic Elementary School (Catholic, K-6)	Caernarvon	684	484.5	70.8%
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>8869</b>	<b>4704</b>	<b>53.03%</b>

Source: 2018 - CLASS, 2019 - RAMS (estimated)

Information was not available for the following schools which were within the area reviewed:

- St. Timothy Catholic Elementary School (Catholic, K-6)
- Caernarvon School (Public, K-6)
- St. Edmund Catholic Elementary/Junior High School (Catholic, K-9)
- Mee-Yah-Noh School (Public, K-6)
- St. Anne Catholic Elementary School (Catholic, K-6)
- St. Philip Elementary Catholic School (Catholic, K-6)
- St. Lucy Catholic Elementary School (Catholic, K-6)