
EDUCATION FACILITIES PLAN



Grande Prairie Public School Division
Executive Summary, 2025-2028 Capital Plan



**Grande Prairie
Public School
Division**

2025-2028 Capital Plan

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2025/2028 – 3 YEAR CAPITAL PLAN

Identified Project	Priority
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Permanent Addition – Grande Prairie Composite High School 9 – 12	1
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Two story addition to accommodate increasing enrolment

Planning Period:	2025-2026
Opening Date:	2027
Capacity:	450
Total Budget:	\$14,000,000

Permanent Addition – Charles Spencer High School 9 – 12	2
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Two story addition to accommodate increasing enrolment

Planning Period:	2027-2028
Opening Date:	2029
Capacity:	200
Total Budget:	\$6,300,000

New School – New School in Kensington Neighborhood K – 8	3
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Accommodate population growth

Estimated Opening Date:	Sept 2027
Capacity:	600 students
Total Budget:	\$30,000,000

Replacement School – Crystal Park School K – 8	4
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New Replacement School

Capacity:	680
Total Budget:	\$ 37,700,000

End of list for all capital projects new or modernization.

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INTRODUCTION

The Division has identified its facility needs after reviewing and assessing areas requiring maintenance and capital investment in the short term and longer term. The three-year capital plan highlights the priorities that were identified from that process which are detailed below.

INFORMATION ABOUT GRANDE PRAIRIE AND OUR DIVISION

The city of Grande Prairie is a hub for the northwest corner of the province and serves a regional trading area of over 300,000 (per the city's Economic Profile – 2020) in population. It is evident that Grande Prairie will continue to be an economic hub for the Northern Alberta and British Columbia Peace Country which will continue to drive the growth in the city. The economic area of Grande Prairie continues to have one of the lowest unemployment rates in the province.

Banff-Jasper-Rocky Mountain House and Athabasca-Grande Prairie- Peace-River			
	Dec-23	Nov-23	Dec-22
Labour Force	209.2	204.5	195.1
Employed (000s)	200.1	195.5	185.2
Unemployed (000s)	9.1	9	9.9
Unemployment Rate	4.3%	4.4%	5.1%
Alberta Unempl Rate	5.6%	5.3%	5.2%

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey

As per the city's January 2024 Economic Development newsletter, the unemployment rate for December 2023 in the Athabasca, Grande Prairie and Peace River region was at 4.3% (5.1% Dec-22) as compared to the province at 5.6% (5.2% - Dec-22).

The city continues to be one of the youngest in the province. A review of the city's Economic Profile – 2020 on its website indicates a population with the median age is 31.9 which drives growth in the student population. Because of the population demographic in the city our Division will continue to grow. The trends indicate the continuation of young families and stable birth levels in the foreseeable future.

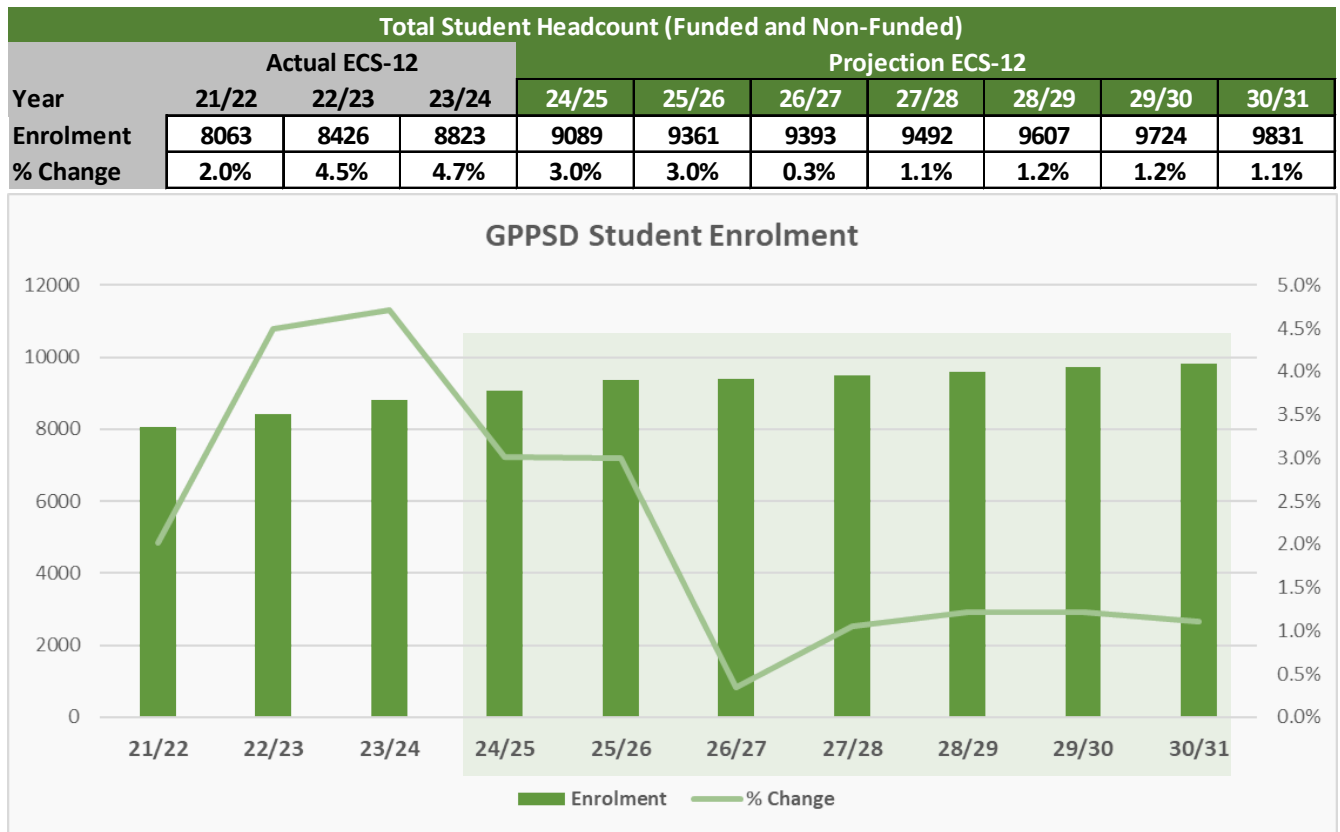
In the last year, Alberta has experienced a record interprovincial migration alongside an increase of international migration. As a result, cities like Grande Prairie have seen an influx of growth from outside the province of more than 184,000 or just over four percent as per Statistics Canada in the period of July 1, 2022 to July 1, 2023.

Due to the provincial migration trends since 2021, Grande Prairie has experienced a reversal of families moving away from the city. This translated into substantial increases in student enrolments since the 2021/22 school year. The Division has experienced an increase of 9.4% over the last two years as illustrated in the table and chart below.

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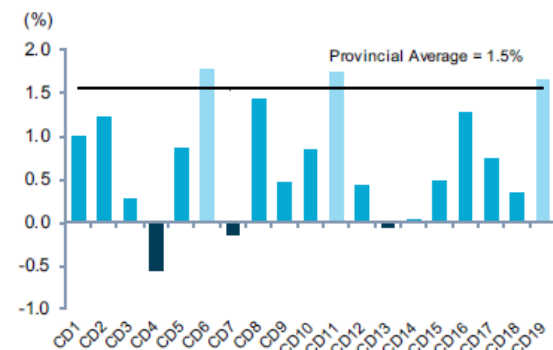


The current school year growth was driven from the out of province and international migration. This current school year we experienced a net transfer into our division of 192 (22/23 - 102). We expect this trend to continue based on economic predictions for the area alongside the provincial population growth projections as prepared by Statistics Canada and Alberta Treasury Board and Finance.

Grande Prairie is one of three Census Divisions (CD19) which is predicted to exceed the average provincial population growth in the next thirty years (*source: Population Projections: Alberta and Census Divisions, 2023-2051, Treasury Board and Finance, July 5, 2023*). Per the report, Alberta’s average annual rate of growth between 2021 and 2051 is expected to be 1.5% while Census Division 19 (CD19) containing the city of Grande Prairie is predicted to be on average of 1.6% per year, the third highest in the province after Calgary and Edmonton. For past decades Grande Prairie and area has grown substantially and in years of economic downturn in the rest of the

FIGURE 10: AVERAGE ANNUAL POPULATION GROWTH BY CENSUS DIVISION

Census Divisions, 2022-2051



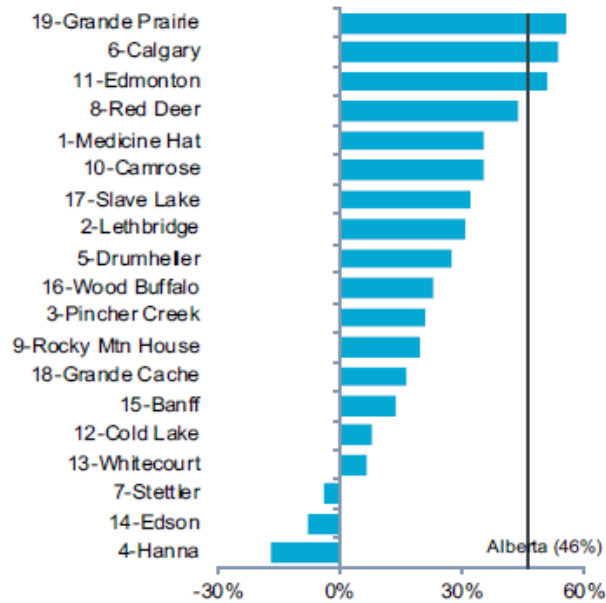
Sources: Statistics Canada and Alberta Treasury Board and Finance

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province, the region operated with a continued strong economy and continued to attract families due to the labour and economic opportunities. This will continue to drive the growth in our division and supports our planning with the priorities we have identified in our three-year capital plan.

FIGURE 11: PERCENT CHANGE OF 0 TO 14 YEAR OLDS
Census Divisions, 2022-2051



Sources: Statistics Canada and Alberta Treasury Board and Finance

Grande Prairie continues to be a young city, as such the percentage growth in the 0-14 year olds as indicated in the chart to the left from the Population Projections: Alberta and Census Divisions, 2023-2051, Treasury Board and Finance, July 5, 2023 report will be the highest in the province. This trend will continue to fuel the growth of our Division and the need for additional classroom capacity. As indicated in the report the CD19 (Grande Prairie), this region is forecasted to have net inflows of migrants between 2023 and 2051 continuing the momentum for future growth.

HIGH SCHOOL ENROLMENT SUMMARY

High School Enrolment Capacity

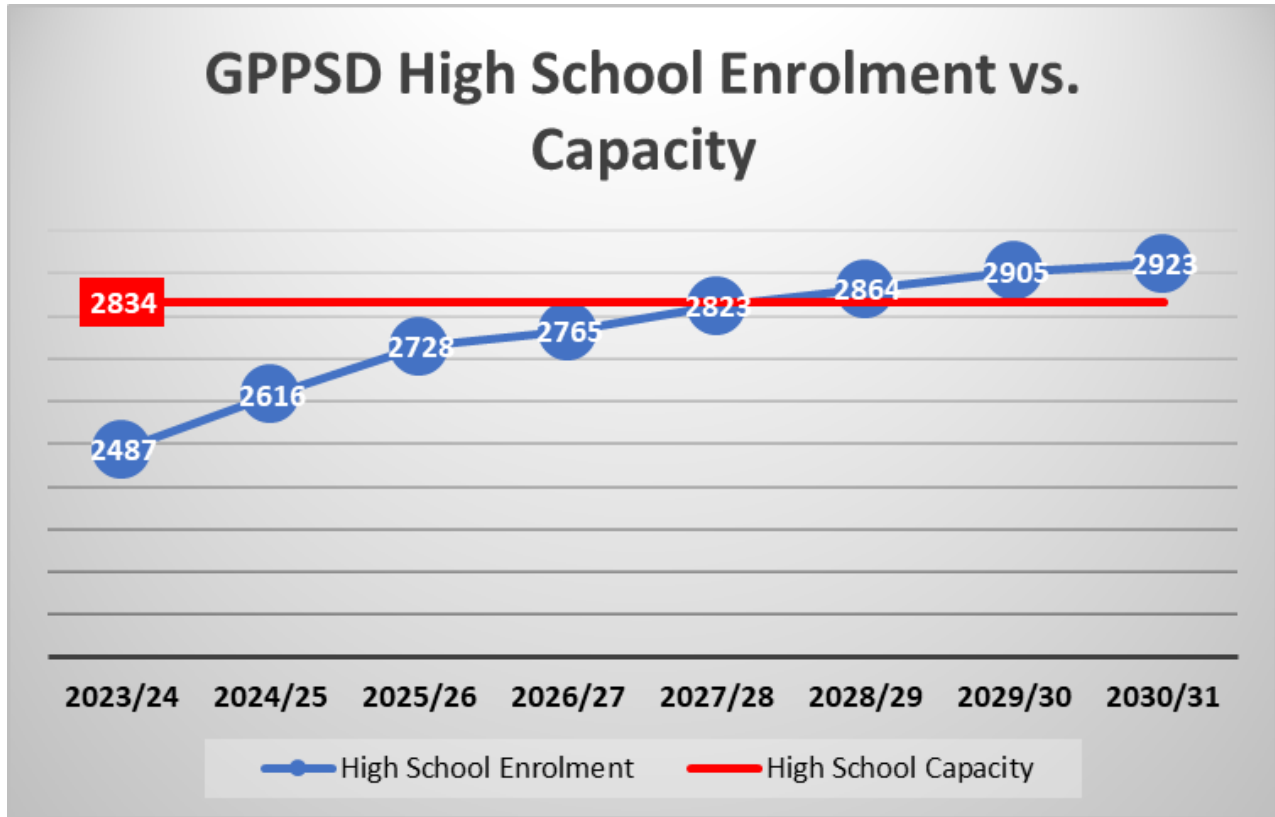
As indicated in the introduction of this report, the city of Grande Prairie has been identified as an urban center that will surpass the average provincial population growth. Utilizing the information from the government's population report we have prepared a ten-year enrolment forecast based on the average 1.6% growth for Grande Prairie. This is a modest growth model when we look at the historical averages in Grande Prairie over the last two decades. Therefore, it is also realistic that higher growth scenarios may occur depending on economic drivers.

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The graph and table below are the comparison of the high school enrolment projections derived from the Division’s annual growth model compared to the current available high school capacity. The Division will exceed its available capacity in the 2028/29 school year.



School Year	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
High School Enrolment	2487	2616	2728	2765	2823	2864	2905	2923
High School Capacity	2834	2834	2834	2834	2834	2834	2834	2834
% Utilization	87.8%	92.3%	96.3%	97.6%	99.6%	101.1%	102.5%	103.1%
% Growth	6.3%	5.2%	4.3%	1.4%	2.1%	1.5%	1.4%	0.6%

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CAPITAL PROJECT SUMMARIES

Grande Prairie Composite High School - Permanent 450 student addition to the core building

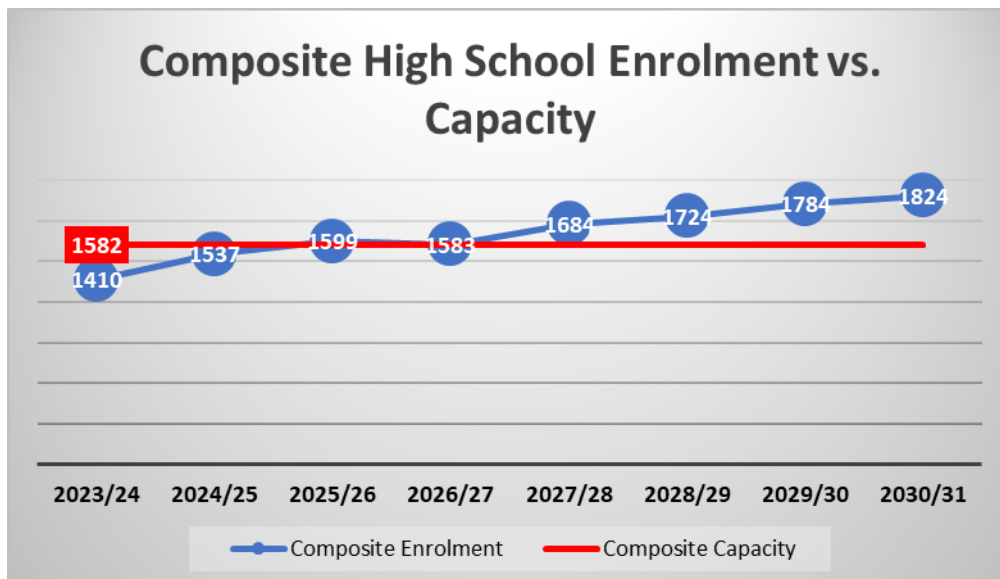


The Division revised its attendance boundaries to be in proportion to the size of our two high schools. With the recently opened replacement of the Composite High School, the boundary adjustment relieved capacity issues in Charles Spencer our southern city high school which had been operating at a maximum capacity for several years. With the new boundaries the Composite High School opened

at 80% capacity. The school is built to accept 1582 students. Projections for the 2024/25 school year of 1537 students, or 97.2% utilization, indicates the school has already reached full operational capacity as per Alberta Education’s guidelines and funding model. While applying the moderate population growth expected in Grande Prairie (1.6% annually) we predict we will exceed the physical space capacity of the building by the 2025/26 school year.

The yearly results of the projection model are summarized in the table below.

School Year	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
Composite Enrolment	1234	1269	1410	1537	1599	1583	1684	1724	1784	1824
Composite Capacity	1582	1582	1582	1582	1582	1582	1582	1582	1582	1582
% Utilization	78.0%	80.2%	89.1%	97.2%	101.1%	100.1%	106.4%	109.0%	112.8%	115.3%



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The schematic prepared for the addition below indicates the location of the three-story core building addition containing 18 classrooms for 450 additional student capacity.

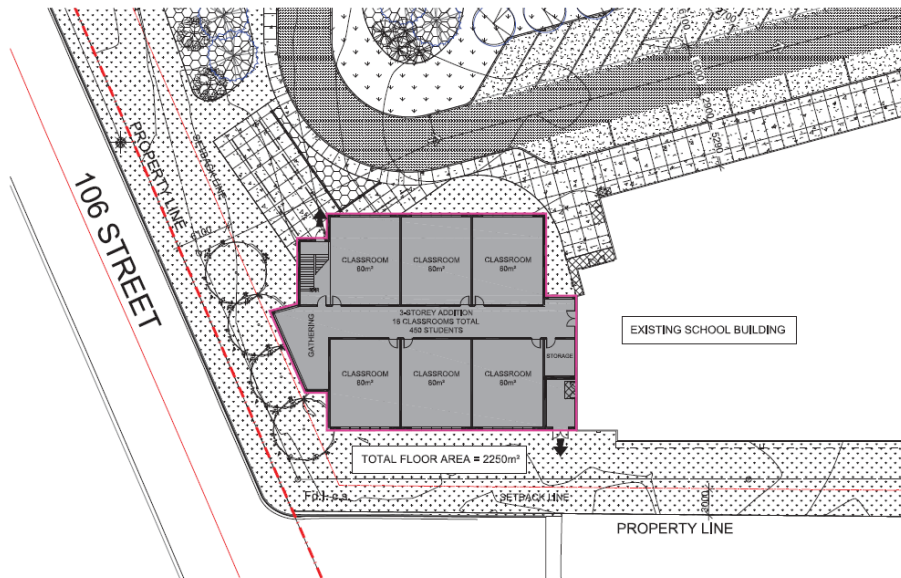


 THE WORKUN GARRICK PARTNERSHIP
Architecture and Interior Design Inc.



PROPOSED MASSING Grande Prairie Composite High School Classroom Addition Study

AUGUST 22, 2023



 THE WORKUN GARRICK PARTNERSHIP
Architecture and Interior Design Inc.



PROPOSED LAYOUT Grande Prairie Composite High School Classroom Addition Study

AUGUST 22, 2023

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Charles Spencer High School - Permanent 200 student addition to the core building

The Charles Spencer High School site cannot accommodate the addition of any more modular classrooms as we are currently as close as is possible to the property line. In addition to having no other property space, the Division undertook a comprehensive attendance boundary revision for the opening of the replacement Composite High School in September 2022 to relieve capacity issues in Charles Spencer High School. The high school boundaries were right sized



for the corresponding sizes of our two high schools. Proportionally the boundaries are now set with a very long-term view. Any other changes to the boundaries would not be operationally beneficial and as it would further accelerate the need for expansion at the Composite High School which is detailed in this report. The transportation logistics would also not be feasible. Transportation of students from the southern part of the city to a northside high school is not practical and does not align with provincial goals of decreasing ride times for our students. As a Division we have exhausted every option available to delay the permanent addition expansion to the high school and the next necessary step is to start the planning process to add the addition in order to properly serve the southern city population and it's public education needs.

The yearly enrolments for the school based on the projection model are summarized in the table below.

School Year	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
Charles Spencer Projection	1077	1079	1129	1182	1139	1140	1121	1099
Charles Spencer Capacity	1252	1252	1252	1252	1252	1252	1252	1252
% Utilization	86.0%	86.2%	90.2%	94.4%	91.0%	91.1%	89.5%	87.8%

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New School in the Kensington Development

Another identified area that will drive increases in enrolment is the development of a new residential subdivision. Included in this report is information on the city's Kensington Area Structure Plan (ASP) subdivision in the southwest corner of the city. Originally this ASP indicated 122 hectares of subdivision development, but a subsequent application made to the city has now increased this area to 190 hectares. This is a significant increase in the ASP from what we were originally planning to accommodate. In reviewing the city's data on the draft ASP, it is anticipated the dwellings developed in this area will tend to be towards families who have a higher number of children with market prices at a level that attract young families or new families. The ASP data projects a total population at build out of 7,500 residences. Below is a table projecting the subdivision to have the following student population:

Total Students	19 percent of total population of 7,500	1425
Public School Students	66 percent of total students	940
K-8	70 percent of PS students	658
9-12	30 percent of PS students	282

As shown in the table above, an additional 658 Kindergarten to Grade 8 public school students are projected to join our schools. Development in the area has been ongoing for the last few years and has regained momentum as the economy continues to be strong and recover.

Currently our closest schools to this area, Derek Taylor Public School and Isabel Campbell Public School, which are at 64% and 93% utilization, respectively. Isabel Campbell Public School is in an area that is almost completely built out and but will still experience some continued enrolment growth. The future student population in the Kensington development can be accommodated temporarily in the existing schools in the area, however, in the long term the Kensington neighborhood will require a school.

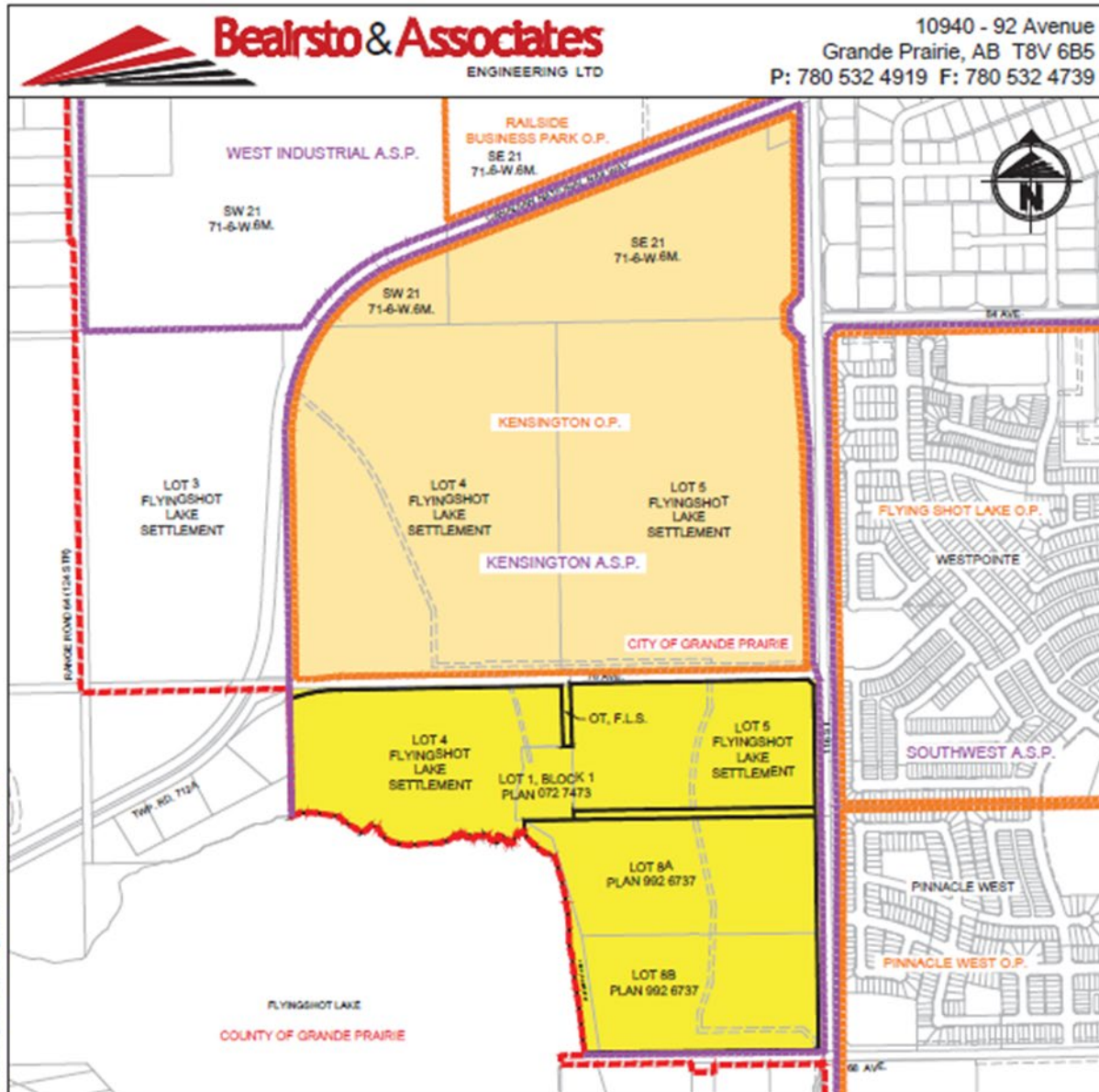
Another significant factor considered as part of the request for a new school is the presence of a major arterial road separating the development from our existing schools. Kensington area students attending Derek Taylor Public School or Isabel Campbell Public School would require busing from the Kensington development. Because of all these factors, our Board has identified this area as a priority for a new school in the medium to long term outlook.

On the next page is the map of the development area taken from the ASP available with the City of Grande Prairie.

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Map 2 - CONTEXT

Legend

- Existing Area Structure Plan Area
- Amendment Area Structure Plan Area
- Area Structure Plans
- Outline Plans
- City Boundary

Grande prairie ALBERTA
Kensington
AREA STRUCTURE PLAN AMENDMENT

Scale: 1:12,500
December, 2017

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Crystal Park School Modernization (Kindergarten to Grade 8)



Crystal Park School is forty years old and has not undergone any significant modernization in its years of operation. This is a unique school in our Division as it was built as a school focused on special needs programming. Its construction consists of wide hallways to ensure ease of access for students who require mobility assistance. It is one of very few schools in Alberta which has a swimming pool. The classrooms are structured in four pods that extend from a common central area. There are specialized areas such as the physiotherapy pod which were built for specific use at the time. However, with today's programming needs the building is inefficient, and these specialized areas need to be reconfigured to allow for better use of the space.

A mechanical systems assessment was commissioned in October of 2017 which highlights many deficiencies. As this assessment was conducted seven years ago, these systems have been maintained to ensure the safety and operation of the building, but it highlights the urgency this priority has become due to not making the provincial capital priority list. In summary the report findings indicate:

1. The existing mechanical systems are at the end of their service life.
2. The mechanical systems are not configured to good engineering practice.
3. Significant upgrades to the mechanical systems are required to bring the systems to good design practices, guidelines, and standards.
4. The existing mechanical systems use a disproportionate amount of energy.

The estimated cost for the upgrades required of the mechanical systems was approximately \$1.4 million at the time the assessment was done. In addition to the mechanical systems, the school flooring, interior finishing, and cosmetics require updating to refresh the overall appearance of the

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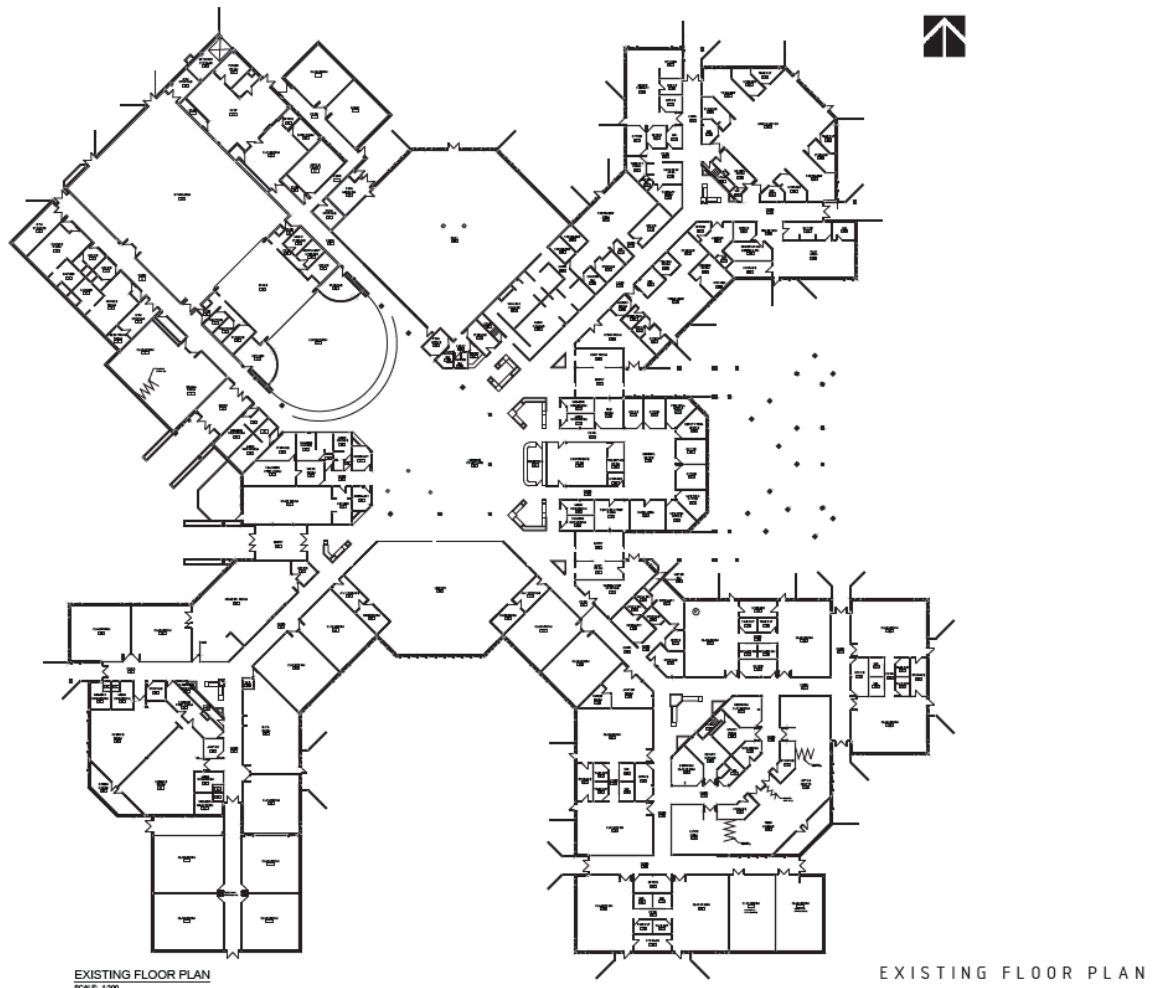


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school as it is showing its age. The Division is continually striving to minimize school operating costs such as switching to energy efficient light bulbs. Crystal Park School has been identified as the least energy efficient school in the Division with utility and energy costs running higher than the average of our remaining schools. This situation is also observed even in the summer months when the school is closed.

In the fall of 2023, a value scoping exercise was led by a consultant to explore all options for the school to help bring the school up to the current education standards of the 21st century. The recommendation must provide for a viable education facility for the future. The evaluation committee considered several modernization options that would retain certain portions of the existing facility. Any modernization option would be a substantial undertaking due to the sheer size and layout of the facility as shown below.



The evaluation committee reviewed four modernization iterations. Three of the modernization options were essentially a new building with some of the larger existing spaces remaining intact. These were disruptive to the existing student population and would cause issues with the proper operation of the school during the process. One modernization option retained most of the

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existing school, however it would leave the school with some aging infrastructure that was designed for a different purpose in mind when built.

The following criteria and items to consider were developed by the committee to evaluate the construction options:

- Student health and safety.
- Provide the best learning environment possible for students.
- Balance education with operational components/ costs.
- Not purpose built for special needs students but where special needs can come and succeed.
- Long term viability of the school. It needs to be the right size for today and for the future to ensure the school is not underutilized.
- Ability to adapt and grow. Flexible grade structure.
- Improved functionality of the school.
- Meets the requirements of 21st century learning.
- Sustainability.
- Impact on community understanding about the function of Crystal Park School. Share the Division has transitioned from having a dedicated special needs focus at Crystal Park School to offering more inclusive teaching methods and structures in all schools across the Division.
- Infrastructure and age of the building.
- The swimming pool.

After having considered all the advantages and disadvantages of the five options, the participants concluded the best option was to pursue a replacement school as it would eliminate the aging infrastructure concerns. This course of action does not disrupt the operation of the existing school and allows continued operation until the new school is ready for operations. A new building will be energy efficient and provide flexibility as to the floor plan and design to address the current and future educational needs. The modernization options reviewed were a significant proportion of the cost of a replacement school and demolition costs of the existing school. When the cost of the options is considered in conjunction with the impact to school operations the replacement school approach rises to the top as the preferred option. As such, the Grande Prairie Public School Division is requesting a replacement school for Crystal Park School.

The school has operated for close to forty years without any modernization therefore it is well overdue to be addressed and we owe it to our Grande Prairie community to continue to provide quality and modern facilities where our students are supported to succeed.