

August , 2019

To our dear friends in the Alberta Government:

Our group is seeking support for the repurposing of the North Michener Grounds and Institution Buildings in Red Deer. We are a growing number of local organizations and individuals from multiple sectors that are promoting a creative, collective effort toward a feasible and purposeful plan for this property.

In our strategic vision, this site and the multi-sector development process required has the potential to become a great model for true Collective Impact, to make better use of all community resources and engage all community sectors for social as well as economic benefit. We request that Alberta Infrastructure be given a new mandate regarding the property in order for the Province of Alberta to partner with the Red Deer community to create a plan for the site that will address significant community social and sustainability needs. There are a number of reasons, including the following:

1. The cost to the Provincial Government to ready the site for a market sale would diminish potential returns, and the amount of return on the property is a small drop in the “bucket” of the Provincial deficit. Whereas this project, if done right, would provide immeasurable economic and social returns to the Province and the City of Red Deer.
2. The property could be a key component in galvanizing Red Deer organizations and sectors in a cohesive social action strategy that would solve many problems and create important multi-sector opportunities.
3. An integrated community campus can provide for sustainable, affordable housing creation, business creation and development, job pathways, community sustainability action and learning, green energy production and multi-sector community care alignment. There are existing models that demonstrate the value of these uses.
4. Creative exploration of viable ways to utilize any remaining structures could save development dollars, showcase green building innovation, and satisfy relevant codes for public safety.
5. The Canada Green Building Council and Green Business Certification Inc. (GBCI) have developed the Investor Confidence Project and Investor-Ready Energy Efficiency verification which the institution buildings pre-qualify for, making a solid business case for investment in their restoration.
6. The land is an important leveraging asset with the NHS Co-Investment fund, Federal and Provincial energy programs, and local investment to redevelop and manage the space with as low financing costs as possible to maximize surplus revenues.
7. There is potential for surplus revenues to finance further development projects and contribute to further Provincial strategy goals that would sustainably provide for the spectrum of housing and supports needs.

We request some time and consideration as we work with the community to develop a proposal and business plan utilizing best practices for integrated housing and supports as well as greening and mixed-use concepts for sustainability. We would like to have access to the Environmental Scan of the institution buildings that was reportedly performed in the Fall of 2018.

Please see the attached document listing the organizations and community entities that are interested in a collective effort to use this property to the best advantage for Albertans.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We will continue to develop the concept and hope to present it for more formal endorsement.

Yours in Social Benefit,

Red Deer Social Benefit Cooperative (currently forming)

Contact Coordinators:

Deborah Gregson 780-978-4561, dgregson@hearthsocialprofitcompany.ca

Heidy Panameno 403-708-9727, heidy@panamenoproductions.ca

Michener North Site Development in Red Deer- Interested Organizations and Entities:

ReThink Red Deer, one of our member groups - have been working on securing access to this property since 2013, and have most recently secured support letters for implementing a community renewable energy system including Red Deer South MLA, Red Deer North MLA, Red Deer College, BCIT, Canada Green Building Council, Alberta Solar CoOp, ReWatt Power, Sun Country Highway, and Sun Country Farm (submitted to Energy Efficiency Alberta Feb 22, 2019). And several others of our current members have been part of a grassroots movement to reconsider this property for a number of years.

Another of our member organizations, Panemeno Productions, has a community documentary in process showing the potential of these buildings through the Telus StoryHive. Another member group is forming a non-profit Social Benefit Housing and Community Development Cooperative and has been working on an initial feasibility and design for sustainable mixed-use, and mixed-income residential solutions that can help provide job opportunities and pay for continued development.

Additionally, there are a number of organizations and entities in Red Deer and Area that have been working toward important social solutions. This is not an exhaustive list: City of Red Deer; Central Alberta Sexual Assault Support Center; Alberta Health Services; Red Deer Native Friendship Center and Urban Aboriginal Voices; Central Alberta Poverty Reduction Alliance; Hope Mission; Mustard Seed; Red Deer Local Immigrant Partnership. There are many applications for this site, beyond even what has already been discussed or considered among these groups, that will help them achieve the outcomes they would like to see.

This group created a local needs assessment and plan for housing development and are currently looking for support and solutions (SIHOCA): Central Alberta Women's Outreach; Canadian Mental Health Association: Safe Harbour; Red Deer Housing Authority; Central Alberta Women's Shelter; Piper Creek Foundation. Having available land, energy production and other supporting enterprises, including revenue generation for future development, on site would help them achieve their housing goals and make the best use of finite and limited resources toward sustainable housing development.

These organizations have an interest in creating a center and/or effort for healing, inclusion, unity, and community building: Red Deer Native Friendship Center; Urban Aboriginal Voices; Cultural Heritage Society; Welcoming and Inclusive Communities. This site would work well for such spaces.