

# Public Consultations: Report Summary

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PROJECT 4 | VEGREVILLE VALUE SCOPING SESSION

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND.....	3
ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY .....	4

## BACKGROUND

Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) comprises of five geographic sectors—Sector 1, Sherwood Park; Sector 2, Strathcona County; Sector 3, Fort Saskatchewan; Sector 4, Lamont County; and Sector 5, Minburn County. The latter, Sector 5, includes two EIPS schools that serve students living in the western portion of Minburn County and the Town of Vegreville. A.L. Horton Elementary is the elementary school. It offers kindergarten to Grade 6. Vegreville Composite High is the secondary school that provides programming for students in grades 7 through 12.

Over the last few years, both schools have experienced a significant drop in enrolment, affecting program delivery and facility operations. To put it into perspective, Vegreville Composite High's current utilization rate has fallen to just 37 per cent. Meanwhile, A.L. Horton's current utilization rate has dropped to 72 per cent. Additionally, for the 2020-21 year the operational costs for both school sites are well above the Division average (\$6,966). A.L. Horton's annual operational costs for 2020-21 was \$8,098 and Vegreville Composite's was \$8,060. In fact, A.L. Horton's projected five-year maintenance cost is \$1.8 million. Vegreville Composite High's five-year projected maintenance cost is \$9 million. Both are significant.

Every year, EIPS, along with all school boards provincially, submit a Three-Year Capital Plan to Alberta Education that identifies its top capital needs—the province then uses these to create a provincial capital plan. For the last three years, EIPS has included Sector 5 in its Three-Year Capital Plan—requesting provincial funding to conduct a value scoping session with community stakeholders in Vegreville and area. Value scoping is a proven public engagement method to explore alternative solutions that provide a high value for money and maximize the utilization and functionality of school infrastructure. Generally, the input helps ensure a broad range of perspectives are considered when developing and evaluating potential options.

In 2022, the province granted EIPS' funding request for Sector 5. As such, the Division hosted a two-day value scoping session for the region—on September 12 and September 14. Facilitated by START Architecture, the session included representatives from the Government of Alberta, the EIPS Board of Trustees, EIPS administration, A.L. Horton Elementary, Vegreville Composite High, school council, the Town of Vegreville, the County of Minburn, and the Village of Andrew. The focus: To develop possible solutions to improve both schools' facility utilization rates, five-year maintenance costs and overall operational costs—and, at the same time, optimize learning environments for students to ensure high-quality educational program delivery. An optimal outcome is a consensus around a preferred option, however, decisions related to capital plans rest with the EIPS Board. The following is a summary of the value scoping session, including the working-group meetings that took place before the sessions.

# ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

## PHASE 1: PRE-WORKSHOP MEETING – SPRING 2022

May 17, 2022: 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

**In-person attendance: 9**

EIPS completed the Vegreville value-scoping session in two phases. Phase 1 included a pre-workshop meeting. Phase 2 included the two value scoping session workshops. The pre-workshop meeting took place in May 2022. Attendees included Chris Woollard, an architect with START Architecture and the workshop facilitator, staff from EIPS Facility Services and the two school principals provided qualitative data to the project team. The purpose: To collect base information and compile relevant internal and external reports. The meeting also included a site visit of both schools and an inspection of the mechanical, electrical, structural and functional components.

## PHASE 2: VALUE SCOPING SESSION WORKSHOPS – FALL 2022

Day 1: Sept. 12, 2022; 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**In-person attendance: 29**

Day 2: Sept. 14, 2022; 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**In-person attendance: 20**

Phase two of the project included the two Vegreville value scoping session workshops, which took place in September 2022. Attendees were invited by START Architecture, on behalf of EIPS and included representatives from the Government of Alberta, the EIPS Board of Trustees, EIPS administration, A.L. Horton Elementary, Vegreville Composite High, school councils and the Town of Vegreville. START Architecture, the facilitator, guided the attendees through nine value scoping phases—Summary, Organizational, Information, Scope, Functional Analysis, Creative, Development, Evaluation, and Summary and Recommendation. A complete overview of the day's activities is detailed in the final report, Value Scoping Session Report: Vegreville schools solutions (see pg. 3, Attachment 2).

On Day 1, attendees worked through the first seven phases and developed eight possible solutions. START Architecture then created high-level concept plans and the associated expenses for each of the eight options. On Day 2, START Architecture shared these concept plans and costs. Attendees then reviewed the options and evaluated how well they met the community's needs—based on the Functional Analysis criteria established on Day 1.

Throughout the discussion, participants from all stakeholder groups emphasized the importance and value of the Career and Technology Foundations (CTF) and Career and Technology Studies (CTS) spaces at Vegreville Composite High. Because retaining the school's CTF and CTS spaces was such an important requirement, it strongly influenced how the group ranked the eight options.

Overall, the best-performing solution was Option 2:

- a major modernization and addition to Vegreville Composite High School;

- a grade reconfiguration at Vegreville Composite High—offering kindergarten to Grade 12—to accommodate students from A.L. Horton Elementary;
- closing and demolishing A.L. Horton Elementary; and
- an estimated cost projection of approximately \$39 million.

*NOTE:* While Option 2 retains CTS spaces, the functional layout and use may not remain in the school's current configuration.

The second-highest performing option was Option 5:

- a new replacement school that combines A.L. Horton Elementary and Vegreville Composite High—offering kindergarten to grade 12 programming;
- loss of CTS spaces; and
- an estimated cost projection of approximately \$40 million.

START Architecture's final report, Value Scoping Session Report: Vegreville schools solutions, details all eight options explored by the group in detail (see pg. 20, Attachment 2).