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Report
Wabamun Facilities Review

Submitted to:
Parkland County

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
1. Executive Summary	3
2. Introduction	7
2.1 Background Information	7
2.2 Study Objectives	7
3. Study Approach	8
4. Current Building Usage	9
4.1 Civic Centre	9
4.2 Jubilee Hall	10
4.3 Old Firehall	11
4.4 Old Water Treatment Plant	12
4.5 Public Works Building and Storage Shed	13
5. Facility Financials	15
5.1 Revenue and Cost Savings	15
6. Engagement Results	18
6.1 Recurring Themes	18
6.2 Notable Comments	18
6.3 Engagement Summary	19
7. Facility Analysis	20
7.1 Key Considerations	20
7.1.1 Population and Demographics	20
7.1.2 Market Conditions	21
7.1.3 Wabamun Vision and Growth Outlook	22
7.1.4 The Wabamun Public Library	23
7.2 Potential Changes and Impacts	24
7.2.1 Civic Centre	25
7.2.2 Jubilee Hall	27
7.2.3 Old Firehall and Public Works	28
7.2.4 Old Water Treatment Plant	29
7.2.5 The Community of Wabamun	29
8. Recommendations	30
8.1 Special Considerations	30
8.1.1 Facility Demolition/Disposition	30
8.1.2 Building a New Facility	30
8.2 Facilities	31

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 7-1	Population by Age Group, Wabamun and Province of Alberta ..21
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LIST OF TABLES

Table 1-1	Wabamun Municipal Facility Uses and Users3
-----------	--

Table 1-2	Adjusted Annual Wabamun Facility Cost Per Square Foot Net of Cost Savings	5
Table 5-1	Estimated Annual Facility Costs	15
Table 5-2	Cost Savings Resulting from Having Established Operations in Wabamun Facilities	16
Table 5-3	Adjusted Annual Wabamun Facility Cost Per Square Foot Net of Cost Savings	17
Table 7-1	Population Counts Over Time for the municipality of Wabamun, Parkland County, and Alberta	20
Table 7-2	Summary of Wabamun Facility Users, Costs, and other Considerations.....	25
Table 7-3	Advantages and Challenges Related to Relocating Wabamun Public Library into the Wabamun Civic Centre.....	26
Table 7-4	Accommodating the Wabamun Public Library in the Civic Centre, Estimated Costs for Each Option Suggested by ISL.....	27
Table 7-5	County Costs Related to Jubilee Hall	28
Table 8-1	Estimated Replacement Facility Construction Costs ¹	31
Table 8-2	Wabamun Facility Recommendations.....	32



1. Executive Summary

In late 2020, Parkland County began the absorption of the former summer village of Wabamun, which included a number of municipally owned facilities. With the absorption process now complete, the County is interested in better understanding the degree to which these Wabamun facilities are now being used, either by municipal or non-municipal interests, and whether there is an opportunity to deliver services in a more efficient manner. To that end, Nichols Applied Management (Nichols) has conducted a review of five Wabamun facilities, specifically: the storage building (old WTP), the old firehall, the public works building, the Jubilee Community Hall, and the Civic Centre/Municipal Offices.

The review process involved a review of known lifecycle/capital requirements for each facility, engagement with stakeholders, a tour of the facilities, and a review of County documents and public data.

Engagement revealed that several of the facilities see significant use in municipal operations, while others play prominent roles in Wabamun community life. Table 1-1 summarizes the current uses and users of the five Wabamun municipal facilities.

Table 1-1 Wabamun Municipal Facility Uses and Users

Facility	User(s)	Use(s)	Impacts of Loss
Civic Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FCSS Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One office used daily; a second office used ~2x per week by Spruce Grove FCSS Another room used for Neighbourlink Food Pantry Multiple groups/users occasionally use office space or book the boardroom for meetings or presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal - FCSS staff can work from home or in Stony Plain Minor - Would need to find alternate space for Food Pantry Minimal – meetings and presentations can occur elsewhere
Jubilee Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library FCSS General Public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library operations and programming events An after-school programs operates two days per week Summer camps run here for 1-2 weeks each summer Available for public rentals (e.g., weddings and funerals) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant– would need new facility Significant – would need new facility Significant – no alternative location serves a similar function in community

Facility	User(s)	Use(s)	Impacts of Loss
Old Firehall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enforcement Ag - Horticulture Fire Services Citizens on Patrol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have established a satellite office with a stationed officer Also store a couple of vehicles and host meet and greet events Store tools and equipment Seasonal staff use it as a home base Store boat during winter months (Sep-May) Use one office space and the training area for routine operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant – would likely move to Tomahawk, negatively impact ability to provide service and reduce presence in a relatively high crime area Moderate – Can likely store equipment elsewhere, but operations would be less efficient as majority of work is in Wabamun Minor – can store boat in Acheson or Tomahawk Unknown
Old WTP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilities – Sewer and Water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Store sewer flusher and smaller tools Conduct minor repair work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate – would need to find alternate storage location, with loading dock, for sewer flusher
Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Works - Roads Parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grader stored in yard and some supplies kept in storage shed year-round During winter, a steamer and other equipment kept in main building and a bobcat is stored in the yard to load sanding truck Have established a satellite office with permanent staff member here using office space, workspace, and storage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate – equipment and materials could be moved to main yards in Stony Plain or Tomahawk, but Wabamun is more central and improves operational efficiency Significant – other offices/spaces are available, but in less central locations. About 50% of the work done from this location is in Wabamun, so there would be a decrease in operational efficiency

Facility	User(s)	Use(s)	Impacts of Loss
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use yard and storage shed to keep equipment/materials 	

As one would intuitively expect, the largest Wabamun facilities generally cost the most to maintain and represent the largest annual cost to Parkland County. The projected total annual facility costs range from a low of approximately \$50,000 per year (Old Water Treatment Plant) to a high of approximately \$300,000 per year (Jubilee Hall). Comparing the facilities on a cost per square foot basis removes the size bias and shows that the projected annual cost per square foot ranges from a low of \$21.97 (for the Public Works facility) to a high of \$46.06 (Civic Centre). Additionally, some of the facilities also provide an economic benefit to the County; Jubilee Hall provides rental revenue, while municipal use of the Old Firehall and the Public Works facilities allow for more efficient operations and cost savings largely due to reduced driving time and distance.

Table 1-2 outlines the projected annual costs, both gross and net, for each facility analyzed for this study.

Table 1-2 Adjusted Annual Wabamun Facility Cost Per Square Foot Net of Cost Savings

Facility	Gross Annual Cost/Sqft ¹	Net Annual Cost/Sqft ¹
Civic Centre	\$46.06	\$46.06
Jubilee Hall	\$38.47	\$36.98
Old Firehall	\$30.20	\$26.43
Old WTP	\$43.38	\$43.38
Public Works	\$21.97²	\$17.52²

¹ Annual cost values include both the annual operating costs plus annual lifecycle costs.

² Public Works figures presented here include only the 3,600 ft² main shop. The facility also includes a fenced yard and a 2,900 ft² storage building. The storage building is unheated and requires little to no maintenance, but if the annual expenses are attributed to the combined 6,500 ft² of both buildings then the net cost/ft² is \$9.70.

In addition to economic considerations, study engagement revealed valuable information about the role the Wabamun facilities play in community life. Both Jubilee Hall and the Civic Centre have symbolic value for Wabamun residents. In particular, the Wabamun Civic Centre is an underutilized facility located in the heart of the town centre and could house new users, services, or other amenities, thereby re-establishing the building as a community hub. One frequent stakeholder suggestion was to move the Wabamun Public Library, another keystone of Wabamun life, from its current location in Jubilee Hall into the Civic Centre. In general, there is community demand for additional amenities and services, particularly for recreation facilities, in Wabamun that could potentially be housed by the existing Wabamun facilities. Some stakeholders also pointed out the strategic advantages of having facilities in Wabamun, which is centrally located within Parkland County and easily accessible off Highway 16. Although some respondents lamented the cost of maintaining and operating the Wabamun municipal facilities, more respondents were in favour of keeping as many of the buildings and land as possible.

Parkland County may consider demolition of one or more of the existing facilities, saving the annual operational and maintenance costs, then rebuild the facility at a later date when and if needed. A preliminary estimate, based on construction cost data from the Altus Group Canadian Cost Guide 2023 for Edmonton, indicates that the cost to rebuild or construct a new facility would generally be comparable to or greater than the cost savings from not

maintaining the existing facility given a 10-year time horizon. Additionally, there are unknown demolition costs as well as potential environmental liabilities associated with each existing facility. These costs/liabilities would require further investigation if the County is interested in pursuing this option.

Another important consideration is that Parkland County has recently developed the Wabamun Area Vision. The Vision document outlines a 50-year concept for growth around Wabamun Lake that identifies the Hamlet of Wabamun as the best place in which to focus residential and commercial growth in the area.

Currently, the Hamlet of Wabamun is a regional population centre, centrally located within the County, which acts as a secondary hub for several municipal services. Both the Old Firehall and Public Works facilities house multiple municipal departments, allowing for more efficient operations, and appear to have the capacity to accommodate projected future growth. The Old Water Treatment Plant and the Civic Centre play a smaller role in existing service provision but have the potential to house new or expanded amenities and services down the road. In the near term, there appears to be adequate capacity among the Wabamun facilities such that the County could dispose of one or more buildings, thereby reducing operating expenses, with minimal impact on the provision of municipal services. However, the County has also outlined plans to invest \$18 million into the community of Wabamun and surrounding area to revitalize the area and draw in large numbers of new residents and visitors. If the Plan is successful, then Wabamun will grow in size and population, necessitating increased municipal service provision. Continued use and support for these facilities generally allows for more efficient services to a County population centre now and will likely provide sufficient space to accommodate the projected future growth in services.

Parkland County should consider disposing of Jubilee Hall by gifting it to the community. Although the Hall is well used by the public and has symbolic value to the community, it does not play a significant role in municipal service provision. It is also the largest and most costly of the Wabamun facilities. Gifting the hall to the community while supporting its operation through grants would provide significant cost savings to the County and align the Jubilee's operation with that of other community halls in the county.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background Information

In late 2020, Parkland County began the absorption of the former summer village of Wabamun, which included a number of municipally owned facilities. With the absorption process now complete, the County is interested in better understanding the degree to which these Wabamun facilities are now being used, either by municipal or non-municipal interests, and whether there is an opportunity to deliver services in a more efficient manner. To that end, Nichols Applied Management (Nichols) has been asked to complete a review of five Wabamun facilities, specifically: the storage building (old WTP), the old firehall, the public works building, the Jubilee Community Hall, and the Civic Centre/Municipal Offices. This analysis builds on a previous life-cycle cost analysis for each facility completed by ISL Engineering and Land Services (ISL).

2.2 Study Objectives

There are a variety of municipal departments and other organizations currently making use of the five Wabamun facilities. Despite this, these buildings appear to have a significant amount of unutilized or underutilized space. Parkland County has commissioned this study to assess current and potential future facility usage and make recommendations on what facilities/spaces are required to deliver municipal services and meet the needs of the community in the most effective and efficient way.

This study addresses the following fundamental questions:

1. How and to what extent are the five Wabamun municipal facilities currently being used?
2. How might the need for and use of these facilities change in the future?
3. Can or should these facilities/spaces be reconfigured?
4. Which, if any, of these facilities should be disposed of?

3. Study Approach

Conceptually, our approach to consisted of:

- Reviewing the existing usage of and costs related to the five facilities in question. This task included a tour of the five Wabamun facilities with a Parkland County representative and a member of the County Facilities department as well as a review of known lifecycle/capital requirements prepared by ISL and building operating costs provided by the County.
- Meeting with stakeholders to understand their current and anticipated needs, necessary features of the space they occupy, and the benefits and challenges associated with their current space. Stakeholders included elected officials, representatives from a variety of County Departments, the Wabamun Public Library, and the Wabamun Museum Society.
- Reviewing business plans and strategic docs of stakeholders (e.g., Wabamun Area Vision document outlining future development plans for the Hamlet of Wabamun and surrounding area) to understand future space needs as they relate to organizational objectives.
- Comparing and contrasting the current inventory of space to future needs with consideration of the results from the above tasks as well as the prevailing regional property market conditions.
- Optimizing the allocation of space to minimize the cost of space and maximize the benefit associated with divesting (e.g., leasing, selling) excess space subject to the requirements of each stakeholder.

4. Current Building Usage

The following section provides a brief description of each facility being evaluated and summarizes how each is currently being used by organizations within the Hamlet of Wabamun and Parkland County.

4.1 Civic Centre

The Wabamun Civic Centre, commonly referred to as the Village Office, formerly served as the administrative office and council chambers for the Summer Village of Wabamun. The main floor of the building consists of a large meeting/board room and council chambers, which can be divided by a temporary wall, along with five separate offices, a kitchen/break room, and bathrooms. At present, the basement is only partially developed with drywall and ceiling largely in place along with a couple of small storage rooms built in. There are two separate stairwells connecting the basement and main floor. There is also an elevator shaft in place, although no elevator has been installed. There are numerous parking spots in both the front and rear of the building.

The Wabamun Civic Centre is currently used primarily by Family and Community Social Services (FCSS) Parkland County, which has a coordinator occupying one of the building's office spaces on a daily basis. Once or twice per week, a second FCSS staff member from Spruce Grove FCSS typically comes to the Civic Centre and uses a second office space. FCSS staff also make use of additional space in the building to serve as the Neighbourlink Food Pantry (i.e., the local food bank) and multiple FCSS groups will occasionally use the boardroom for meetings or presentations. Several other groups or municipal representatives will also occasionally make use of the Civic Centre for meetings and gatherings, including:

- the Agriculture department, which holds external committee meetings here on a roughly quarterly basis;
- Parkland County, which holds public meetings here once or twice per year;
- one Parkland County councillor who will occasionally use office space for meetings with constituents, once per month on average; and
- the Wabamun Public Library will occasionally, approximately once per quarter, book space for some of its larger programming events (e.g., movie nights).

The basement of the Civic Centre goes largely unused, although a variety of not-for-profit groups and the Wabamun Public Library make use of the available storage capacity.

Nichols notes that the Wabamun and District Museum Society expressed, through the engagement process, that they would be also interested in utilizing some space in the Civic Centre for monthly meetings and/or gaining access to some of its storage space.

Is the Building Effectively Meeting Needs?

A recurring theme during the engagement process was that many stakeholders felt that the Civic Centre is currently being underutilized. FCSS currently has more than enough space to meet their organizational needs and suggested that having other groups or organizations routinely using the building would be beneficial to FCSS operations. FCSS guidelines prohibit staff from meeting with clients without having at least one additional person present in the building; as such, the FCSS coordinator will frequently go to other locations, such as the Wabamun Public Library, to meet with clients.

Impacts if Building Access was Lost

There would likely be minimal impact to current users of the Wabamun Civic Centre if they lost access to the building. The meetings or events held here tend to be infrequent and users feel that these can generally be hosted at an alternate location. The most impacted user would be FCSS, although its coordinator indicated she could easily work from home or make use of office space in Stony Plain instead. Finding a new location to sort and store food donations for the Food Pantry may be the greatest challenge.

However, the Civic Centre does have the capacity to house other services, such as the library or other community groups, or host new businesses in the area. Previous engagement conducted by the County also indicated that the Civic Centre has symbolic value to residents of Wabamun. Disposing of the Civic Centre may negatively impact the community qualitatively, through loss of public spaces and reduced sense of community, and/or hinder future growth plans for the Community of Wabamun.

Minimum User Requirements

FCSS requires at least one office space, although the current coordinator indicated it would be possible to work from home. Given this, the only space that the County would need to accommodate elsewhere would be room to store food donations for the local Food Pantry, the equivalent of one small office space would likely be sufficient.

4.2 Jubilee Hall

Jubilee Hall is the name for the Wabamun community hall. The upstairs of the building is roughly split into two areas, with a large open dance hall with wooden floor and stage featured on one side, while the second side features a recently renovated open/reception area with large seating capacity along with an updated kitchen and a new bar that is currently under construction. This facility is available for public rentals and frequently hosts weddings and funerals; events often occur weekly or more during the spring and fall seasons. FCSS also makes frequent use of the Jubilee's upstairs area for presentations and childcare programs, including an after-school program that operates a couple of days per week and children's summer camps that run for one to two weeks during the summer. The hall also sees occasional (roughly once per month) use from a variety of community groups and non-profits to host events or information sessions such as the engagement sessions hosted by the Wabamun Projects team. Additionally, the Wabamun Public Library will often host its larger, monthly, programming events in the upstairs of the hall.

The main downstairs area of Jubilee Hall is significantly smaller than the upstairs, roughly one-third the size, and is currently home to the Wabamun Public Library. The library has its own separate entrance with a ramp to facilitate wheelchair access, although there is also an interior access from upstairs that is currently blocked off. In addition to an open area with books and reading spaces, the downstairs of the Jubilee also offers a kitchen facility and washroom for the library's use. Notably, there is a secondary downstairs or basement area, accessed by a separate set of stairs, which is home to the building's utilities equipment such as heating and hot water tanks.

Is the Building Effectively Meeting Needs?

The upstairs of the Jubilee Hall is frequently booked for events and appears to be meeting the needs of the community as a gathering space for residents of Wabamun and surrounding area.

Both the library staff and its board have stated that they are happy with their space downstairs of Jubilee Hall. Although it is a relatively small space, staff and patrons often say it provides a "cozy" feel that is nice for a library. The only time that space is truly an issue is during larger programming events, which the library typically hosts monthly. For these larger events, the library must often book space either in the upstairs of Jubilee Hall or at the

Civic Centre. However, library representatives also noted some other minor challenges with the downstairs of Jubilee Hall. There is little or no sound insulation between the upper and lower floors of the Hall, so the library can get very noisy when the after-school program is going on. Also, despite the ramp, some patrons struggle with accessing the library, especially the young and elderly, as the ramp can be difficult to navigate and the entrance door is quite heavy.

Impacts if Building Access was Lost

Jubilee Hall is not home to any municipal operations. However, it was clear through engagement that the library plays a central role in Wabamun community life and has significant symbolic value to residents of Wabamun. Loss of the Hall and/or library would likely have a negative impact on community spirit and feel.

Minimum User Requirements

It would likely be in the best interests of both the County and the community of Wabamun to find alternate space for the library if Jubilee Hall were no longer available, including access to kitchen and bathroom facilities and adequate room for book storage/display.

FCSS would need an alternate location for its after-school programs/care that it currently offers twice weekly.

4.3 Old Firehall

The Old Firehall is made up of 3 office rooms, a larger meeting/training room, a bathroom with shower, a sink area, and storage room. There is also a partially separated garage space with overhead doors and three large parking areas. Although the garage was originally not directly attached to the rest of the firehall, an uninsulated hallway was later added to serve as an internal passageway between it and the office/training area.

This facility is being extensively used by multiple County departments including:

- Enforcement Services – use the Old Firehall as a satellite office with an officer stationed here year-round and store/park a couple of Enforcement vehicles in the garage space. Periodically, the department hosts “Coffee with Cops” events where they invite the public in to meet with officers and have the opportunity to discuss any questions or concerns they might have directly with Enforcement personnel.
- Fire Services – use the garage space to store their boat during the winter (from the September long weekend through the May long weekend), when the boat is not in the water at Wabamun lake.
- Horticulture – stores a variety of tools and equipment here, mostly smaller items like hand tools and weed-eaters. The Horticulture department also hires a seasonal summer staff who is posted to Wabamun and uses the facility as a home base (i.e., using the washroom and eating lunch). One of the garage bays is allocated to park their County vehicle, although this is not always used as some summer staff choose to pick up their vehicle in Stony Plain each day.

In addition to municipal users, the Old Firehall is also used by the community group Citizens on Patrol (COP). COP uses one of the offices to help run their operations and occasionally holds training sessions for volunteers in the meeting/training room.

Is the Building Effectively Meeting Needs?

Enforcement services feels that the building suits their needs perfectly. It provides adequate office space and allows them to park their vehicles indoors, which helps prevent possible damage to the computer equipment installed in the vehicles that may occur during cold weather. The layout of the Old Firehall also enables

Enforcement to welcome the public into the building while maintaining restricted access to certain areas rooms that contain sensitive information. Enforcement also operates the County animal shelter and suggested that, in the case of a large-scale emergency (i.e., wildfire), the Old Firehall garage space would be well suited to housing animals.

Both Fire Services and Horticulture feel that the space also adequately meets their needs.

Impacts if Building Access was Lost

Personnel from Enforcement Services indicated that a relatively large proportion of County Enforcement activities occur in and around Wabamun due to its being a significant population centre within the County. Having a proper, dedicated space within Wabamun allows them to have a consistent, visible presence in the community and provide faster response to local calls or issues. Enforcement representatives feel that there is no suitable alternative facility in Wabamun where they could relocate if they lost access to the Old Firehall. Likely, they would have to move their satellite office to Tomahawk, which is less centrally located. Ultimately, moving would likely negatively impact their ability to provide service and has the potential to lead to increased crime rates because of reduced Enforcement presence in the community.

Fire services stated that there would be no material impact to their operations if they lost access to the Old Firehall. Their boat could instead be stored at facilities in Acheson or Tomahawk. Although these locations are less convenient and would take longer to transport the boat, the boat is only moved twice per year, once to the lake in the spring and then back to storage in the early fall.

Horticulture stated that losing access to space in Wabamun would make operations less efficient as the majority of their service provision is in Wabamun. However, they only require a relatively small amount of storage space, so their equipment and supplies could likely be moved to another facility in the community.

The community group COP would lose their office and training space, it is unclear where or if they would find new space for their activities.

Minimum User Requirements

Enforcement requires at least one office space with secure/restricted access to protect sensitive information and parking for an Enforcement vehicle.

Fire services would need an alternate storage location for their boat and have indicated that would likely be at existing facilities in Acheson or Tomahawk.

Horticulture would require a small amount of storage space for tools and supplies.

Parkland County may also wish to provide new/alternate office space for the community group Citizens On Patrol.

4.4 Old Water Treatment Plant

This is the original fire hall, dating back to the era when the fire department used a horse-drawn water tank, and is located adjacent to the water treatment facility and old water treatment lagoon area. The building consists of a small office space/employee area immediately next to a large, open bay/garage housing the old, but still functioning, water pump/fill station. There is sufficient room in the bay to park one or two vehicles.

The building is currently used by the Sewer and Water Utilities team to store a variety of tools and occasionally conduct minor repair work. The primary reason the team uses the old water treatment plant is that the building has its own loading dock; this makes the loading/unloading of the team's sewer flusher, which is large and very

heavy, easier and safer. Although the Utilities team makes use of the building on a regular basis, they indicated they only use the storage side and rarely, if ever, make use of the office space.

It was also noted that there are other groups, such as Parks and Roads, who often use the water pump/fill station to fill large water tanks when watering plants or providing dust suppression on gravel roads.

Is the Building Effectively Meeting Needs?

The old water treatment plant is not being extensively used but does serve a very specific purpose for the County's sewer and water team. The building is currently meeting their needs, although converting the current office space into additional storage or workshop space may improve the building's utility.

Impacts if Building Access was Lost

The greatest challenge for the sewer and water utilities team would be in finding a new location to store the sewer flusher. Due to its size and weight, the sewer flusher requires access to a loading dock and the team is not aware of another building in Wabamun that currently offers a loading dock and adequate storage space. They suggested that the old wastewater plant next door would have enough room, but a loading/offloading area would need to be constructed.

Loss of water filling capacity at the old water treatment plant would likely have minimal effect on municipal operations. Those groups currently filling their tanks at the old water treatment plant could instead fill using a fire hydrant or at the Old Firehall. Filling at these locations may be less inconvenient due to longer filling times or, in the case of the hydrants, being located outside, but is unlikely to materially impact operations.

Minimum User Requirements

The Utilities team would need a new location to store the sewer flusher. The location should provide access to a loading ramp in order to facilitate safe loading and unloading of this large, heavy piece of equipment.

4.5 Public Works Building and Storage Shed

The Public Works can be described as a large, open, shop area with five overhead doors. Four of the doors currently open to a parking pad, one gravel and three paved, that generally serve as parking or storage space while the fifth door opens to an area that has been remade as office space/break room. The building also hosts several large shelves, the length and height of the rear wall, for additional storage. The building is attached to a fenced equipment yard that includes a sand and gravel storage shed. On the opposite side of the yard is a large, unheated, and uninsulated storage building.

The Public Works building is used year-round by a variety of County departments, including:

- Public Works – the Roads Maintenance and Drainage team store a grader in the fenced yard year-round and make use of the salt and sand shed. They also use the unheated storage shed throughout the year to store a variety of supplies. During the winter they keep a steamer, along with some other equipment, in the main building and a bobcat vehicle in the fenced yard which they use for loading the sanding truck. During winter road-clearing operations in Wabamun, which typically occurs two to three times per season, Roads personnel use the facility as a home base for washrooms and to eat lunch.
- Parks – the Parks team has established a permanent presence in the Public Works building with a staff member using it for office space, workspace, tool and equipment storage, and to park their work vehicle. The

department also uses the storage building and fenced yard for additional storage of equipment and materials. Currently, Parks personnel makes daily use of the Public Works building on a year-round basis.

Is the Building Effectively Meeting Needs?

Both the Public Works and Parks departments felt that, although the Public Works facility is ageing and may benefit from additional maintenance and repairs, it adequately meets their needs.

Both departments expressed concern that the office space/staff area and washroom are not separated from the workspace/bay area. This means that the staff area tends to be relatively dirty and noisy and generally not a pleasant place to be. There have also been some issues with tools going missing as the facility is used by multiple parties. Although managers state they are generally successful in tracking tools down, this requires considerable time and effort. Additionally, the bays are unable to accommodate either a plow truck or a grader, which is not necessary but would bring added convenience for the Public Works team.

Impacts if Building Access was Lost

Both Public Works and Parks felt that they had adequate space at facilities elsewhere in the County to move their equipment and personnel if they lost access to the Wabamun public works building. However, Wabamun is centrally located within the County and moving would likely result in significantly less efficient operations.

Public Works would likely move their equipment and materials to main yards in either Stoney Plain or Tomahawk. Losing access to storage in Wabamun would result in workers often needing to drive a further distance to pick up supplies. Losing the sand and storage shed would also mean more time and distance to reload the sanding truck or move the grader for winter road maintenance.

Parks stated that if they needed to vacate the public works building in Wabamun, they would relocate to Stony Plain or other less central locations. This would result in much less efficient operations as approximately 50% of the work performed by Wabamun-based personnel takes place in the community of Wabamun.

Minimum User Requirements

The Public Works department would likely be able to find adequate alternate space at other existing facilities and would need to additional space accommodation.

Although Parks could relocate to Stony Plain, this would result in much less efficient operations due to the large proportion of work performed in Wabamun. An alternate office space and small workspace and storage would be required to maintain existing efficiencies. The Parks team also uses the outdoor space for additional storage of vehicles and supplies, so alternate locations for these items may be needed if the outdoor space were also lost.

5. Facility Financials

To properly optimize facility use and recommend efficient options, it is important to understand the cost of operating and maintaining each building. The following section outlines the annual costs associated with each facility, including annual operating costs (as provided by Parkland County) and life-cycle capital costs (as determined by ISL).

Operating costs include utilities and routine maintenance, which tend to be relatively consistent year over year, although increasing somewhat with building usage (e.g., more frequent use results in increased power consumption) and inflation. Capital costs represent the expected cost for planned repairs, renovations, and upgrades. Life-cycle contributions are annual budgetary transfers designed to cover the planned capital costs, often with an additional sum to cover unanticipated repair items or cost increases.

As one would intuitively expect, the larger facilities, which are more expensive to heat and maintain, generally represent the largest annual cost to Parkland County while the smaller facilities cost less. As such, comparing the cost per square foot for each building removes the size bias and allows for a more effective relative comparison. Table 5-1 outlines the annual operating, capital, and lifecycle costs attributed to each facility and shows that:

- total annual costs range from a low of approximately \$50,000 per year (Old Water Treatment Plant) to a high of approximately \$300,000 per year (Jubilee Hall); and
- the annual cost per square foot ranges from a low of \$21.97 (for the Public Works facility) to a high of \$46.06 (the Civic Centre).

Table 5-1 Estimated Annual Facility Costs

Facility	Sqft	Annual Operating Costs	Annualized Capital Costs	Annual LifeCycle Costs	Total Annual Cost ¹	Total Annual Cost/Sqft
Civic Centre	5,400	\$133,720	\$78,102	\$115,022	\$248,742	\$46.06
Jubilee Hall	7,900	\$157,350	\$123,760	\$146,600	\$303,950	\$38.47
Old Firehall	5,399	\$51,600	\$92,616	\$111,476	\$163,076	\$30.20
Old WTP	1,160	\$20,700	\$22,342	\$29,622	\$50,322	\$43.38
Public Works	3,600 ²	\$39,520	\$30,336	\$39,556	\$79,076	\$21.97 ²

¹ Total Annual Cost = Annual Operating Costs plus Annual Lifecycle Costs.

² Public Works figures presented here include only the 3,600 ft² main shop. The facility also includes a fenced yard and a 2,900 ft² storage building. The storage building is unheated and requires little to no maintenance, but if the annual expenses are attributed to the combined 6,500 ft² of both buildings then the cost/ft² decreases to \$12.17.

5.1 Revenue and Cost Savings

For some of the facilities in question, their annual operation and maintenance expenses are offset by revenue generation or cost savings they provide through hosting and facilitating more efficient municipal operations. As discussed in Section 4.2, Jubilee Hall is frequently rented by a variety of users for meetings and events. In 2023, the Hall generated \$11,810 in rental revenue. Assuming the revenue amount stays relatively constant into the future, this would lower the net costs related to the Hall by approximately \$1.50 (roughly 4%) to \$36.98/ft² (Table 5-3).

Additionally, several Parkland County municipal departments have established operations utilizing the five Wabamun facilities (see Section 4) and believe that access to these facilities allows their department to have

more efficient operations. The efficiency gains generally stem from decreased travel time. Being able to store equipment and materials, or have a satellite office, in Wabamun results in fewer trips to and from Stony Plain as well as shorter drives to work sites throughout the County because of Wabamun's relatively central location. This leads to reduced fuel costs for County vehicles and fewer work hours spent driving.

The actual cost savings are likely highly variable each year and dependent upon several factors that are difficult to predict. However, Nichols has prepared a cost savings estimate, based on reasonable assumptions and information provided by the Municipal Departments, that is intended to indicate a representative annual cost savings to the County stemming from use of the Wabamun facilities. The estimate generally reflects a reduction in the number of roundtrips driven between Stony Plain and Wabamun each workday as suggested by each identified department (Enforcement, Horticulture, Parks, and Public Works). It is important to emphasize that these are representative values only and based on 35km of driving distance and 23 minutes of drive time between the two communities as suggested by online mapping software. Actual fuel consumption and drive time will be influenced by vehicle type, driving conditions, and the nature of the individual employee. The number of trips will ultimately depend upon the nature and frequency of services being delivered by the department. Table 5-2 outlines the estimated cost savings by facility and municipal department and suggests that:

- use of the Old Firehall may provide total efficiencies worth an estimated \$20,400 to the Enforcement (\$17,200) and Horticulture (\$3,200) departments; and
- use of the Public Works building may provide total efficiencies worth an estimated \$16,000 to the Parks (\$14,000) and Public Works (\$2,000) departments.

Table 5-2 Cost Savings Resulting from Having Established Operations in Wabamun Facilities

Facility	Department	Wage Savings ¹	Vehicle Savings ²	Total Cost Savings
Old Firehall	Enforcement	\$11,200	\$6,000	\$17,200
	Horticulture	\$1,300	\$1,900	\$3,200
	Old Firehall Total	\$12,500	\$7,900	\$20,400
Public Works	Parks	\$7,400	\$6,600	\$14,000
	Public Works	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,000
	Public Works Total	\$8,400	\$7,600	\$16,000

¹ Wage savings are based on the estimated driving time between Stony Plain and Wabamun provided by online software, as well as employee wages suggested by municipal representatives.

² Vehicle savings include a gas price of \$1.25/litre and vehicle mileage, as well as a fleet service charge of \$0.32/km, as suggested by municipal representatives.

The Old Firehall and Public Works facilities were already the least expensive, per square foot, Wabamun facilities to run and maintain. If the above cost savings (or cost benefits) are considered, then it would further lower their annual cost by roughly 10%. Table 5-3 outlines the total annual gross and net costs per square foot, factoring in any revenue or cost savings, of the facilities in question.

Table 5-3 Adjusted Annual Wabamun Facility Cost Per Square Foot Net of Cost Savings

Facility	Gross Annual Cost/Sqft ¹	Net Annual Cost/Sqft ²
Civic Centre	\$46.06	\$46.06
Jubilee Hall	\$38.47	\$36.98
Old Firehall	\$30.20	\$26.43
Old WTP	\$43.38	\$43.38
Public Works	\$21.97²	\$17.52²

1 Total Annual Cost = Annual Operating Costs plus Annual Lifecycle Costs.

2 Public Works figures presented here include only the 3,600 ft² main shop. The facility also includes a fenced yard and a 2,900 ft² storage building. The storage building is unheated and requires little to no maintenance, but if the annual expenses are attributed to the combined 6,500 ft² of both buildings then the net cost/ft² decreases to \$9.70.

6. Engagement Results

Nichols conducted 17 separate interviews with a total of 22 individuals during the engagement process. The following section outlines key or repeated messages recorded during engagement that relate either to the community of Wabamun or to the five facilities reviewed for this study.

6.1 Recurring Themes

Multiple engagement participants raised the following points.

- The Civic Centre is an underutilized facility and has symbolic value to Wabamun residents.
- The Wabamun Public Library acts as a community hub, playing a central role in Wabamun daily life and drawing visitors to the community.
- There is a lack of recreation facilities and options in the community. In particular, there is a lack of space or activities for youth in Wabamun.
- Wabamun's relatively central location within Parkland County makes it an ideal location for a satellite office or operations branch for several municipal departments as they are able to more effectively or efficiently provide service.
- Several community groups (i.e., The Lion's Club, Citizens on Patrol) would benefit from access to dedicated space.
- Wabamun residents have to leave the community to access many health services (e.g. dental, chiropractic) and may benefit from additional medical facilities and services being available in the Hamlet
- It probably does not make sense to sell municipal buildings or land right now when demand is low and there is impending \$18 million investment planned by the County for re-development of Wabamun and surrounding area.
- There is a desire to bring new businesses/amenities into Wabamun, but it must be in a way that is fair to existing businesses.

6.2 Notable Comments

The following thoughts and comments were raised by a single respondent and provide a key or unique insight into the community of Wabamun and its municipal facilities.

- Jubilee Hall has symbolic value to Wabamun residents.
- There is a notable arts scene in Wabamun and there has been some interest in having dedicated arts space.
- We are seeing more families coming into the community as older residents sell their homes and move away.
- Some of the buildings in question (i.e., Public Works) may have a large environmental liability attached if we sold or redeveloped.
- Prior to dissolution, residents would often stop into the Civic Centre for coffee, to ask questions, or just to chat, that central hub is now missing from the community.
- The community of Wabamun would benefit from something that draws people to the town centre. Visitors tend to stay at the campground or waterfront.

- Parkland County spends a lot of money on maintenance and upkeep of the Wabamun facilities, it would be nice to get them off the books.

6.3 Engagement Summary

The Wabamun Civic Centre is an underutilized facility located in the heart of the town centre. Several engagement participants felt it would be worthwhile to bring new users, services, or other amenities into the building, re-establishing the building as a community hub. One frequent suggestion was to move the Wabamun Public Library, which is a keystone in Wabamun life, from its current location in Jubilee Hall into the Civic Centre. Other respondents suggested that the Civic Centre may also be a suitable location to house medical services, a youth centre, or private business enterprises.

In general, there is community demand for additional amenities and services, particularly for recreation facilities. Several engagement participants suggested repurposing one or more of the Wabamun facilities to house a gymnasium, sports courts, or other recreation options.

Several respondents pointed out the strategic advantages of having facilities in Wabamun, which is centrally located within Parkland County and is easily accessible off Highway 16. Multiple users reported that having office or storage space in the community made department operations more efficient or effective.

Although some respondents lamented the cost of maintaining and operating the Wabamun municipal facilities, more respondents were in favour of keeping as many of the buildings and land as possible. Those in favour of retaining the facilities cited their current usage, the apparent low appetite for Wabamun real estate at this time, and the impending investment by the County into the Hamlet and surrounding area which will likely drive increased need for municipal facilities/services and increased demand for Wabamun real estate in the future.

7. Facility Analysis

7.1 Key Considerations

7.1.1 Population and Demographics

Regional socio-economic data can provide context that helps inform municipal decision making. The following section provides a brief overview of the region's population, demographics, and existing market conditions.

In 2020, Wabamun Summer Village had a population of 666 individuals,¹ its final count before absorption by Parkland County. This would have accounted for approximately 2.0% of the combined Parkland County and Wabamun population at that time. The community of Wabamun's population had been largely stagnant prior to absorption, having increased less than 10% from its 2001 total of 614. As shown in Table 7-1, Wabamun population growth has lagged that of Parkland County and been significantly lower than the provincial rate over the most recent 10 and 20-year periods. Specifically, the table shows that:

- Wabamun saw a nominal decline of 0.7% in its population during the 10-year period between 2011 and 2021;
- during the same 10-year period, Parkland County saw a 6.4% increase in population; and
- population growth in both Wabamun and Parkland County significantly lagged the provincial population increase of 16.9% during that time.

Table 7-1 Population Counts Over Time for the municipality of Wabamun, Parkland County, and Alberta

Community	2001	2011	2021	10-yr Change
Wabamun	614	677	666 ¹	-0.7%
Parkland County	27,771	31,488	33,512 ²	6.4%
Combined	28,385	32,165	34,178	6.3%
Alberta	2,974,807	3,645,257	4,262,635	16.9%

¹ Wabamun's population from 2020, no population count is available for 2021 due to absorption by the County.

² This value is the official 2021 Parkland County population of 34,178 less the assumed Wabamun population from 2020 of 666.

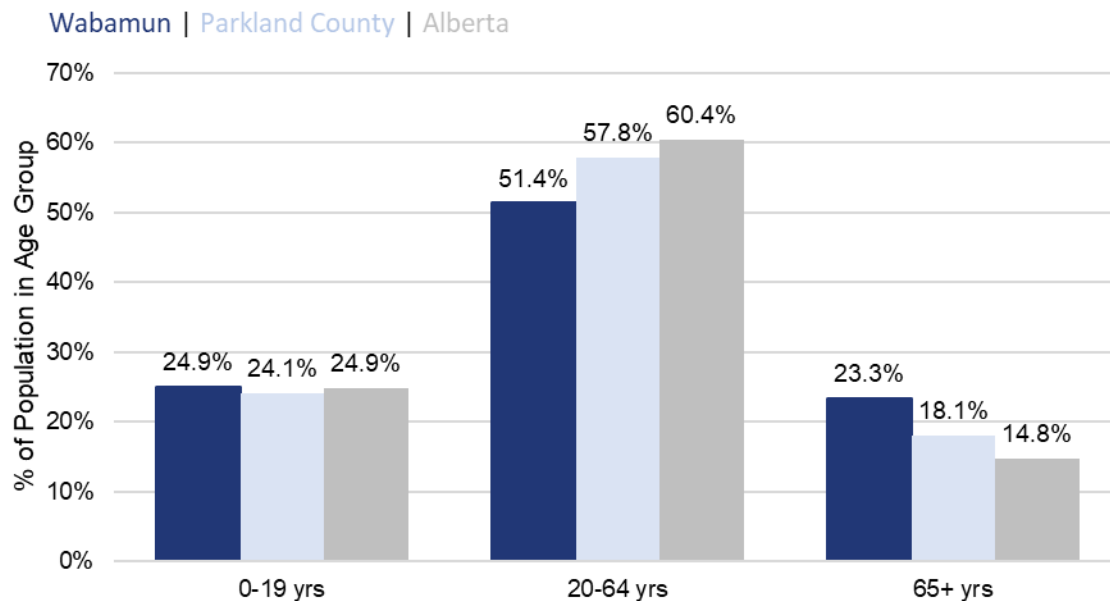
Source: Alberta Regional Dashboard population statistics.

Wabamun also features a population that is somewhat older than the provincial average. Figure 7-1 shows a breakdown of Wabamun's 2020 population by age group, compared to the Parkland County and provincial proportions and shows that:

- Wabamun's population contains a relatively large proportion (23.3%) of residents aged 65 years or older compared to Parkland County (18.1%) or the province overall (14.8%);
- Wabamun's proportion of youth aged 0-19 years (24.9%) is similar to that of Parkland County (24.1%) and equal to the province (24.9%); and
- Wabamun has relatively few adults aged 20-64 years (51.4%) compared to either the Parkland County (57.8%) or the provincial proportion (60.4%).

¹ Alberta Regional Dashboard. 2023. "Wabamun." Available at: <https://regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/wabamun/#/>

Figure 7-1 Population by Age Group, Wabamun and Province of Alberta



Note: Wabamun population breakdown is based on values from 2020 (the last available), while the provincial breakdown is based on 2021 values.

Source: Alberta Regional Dashboard municipal population counts and Statistics Canada 2021 federal census.

The age distribution seen in Wabamun results in a comparatively high dependency ratio (0.94 compared to the County rate of 0.73 or the provincial rate of 0.66). The dependency ratio is the ratio of the combined youth (0 to 19 years) and senior (65 or older) population relative to the working age population (20 to 64 years). This is an important indicator as a high dependency ratio suggests a relatively greater need for social and support services as well as potentially lesser municipal tax revenue being generated to support such services.

Nichols notes that the community of Wabamun is home to a number of seasonal homes and non-permanent residents. Estimating those seasonal numbers is outside the scope of analysis for this study. As such, those non-permanent residents are not reflected in the above numbers.

7.1.2 Market Conditions

The community of Wabamun is not home to a robust number or variety of commercial services. Several engagement participants noted the relative lack of business establishments in the community and a desire to attract new businesses and amenities. Indeed, a review of business count data published on the Alberta Regional Dashboard shows that while Wabamun accounts for roughly 2% of the Parkland County population, it accounted for just 1.1% (13) of Parkland County businesses (1,162 total businesses) in 2021.

The County did see a significant increase in its business count for 2022, adding 138 (12%) to its net businesses count, but it is unknown if any of these businesses were in Wabamun. Through engagement, some stakeholders indicated that there has been some interest from commercial interests in establishing operations in Wabamun, including one party interested in setting up a fitness centre. However, the interested parties indicated a preference to lease or otherwise occupy building space owned by the County, rather than purchasing property of their own.

Some engagement participants indicated that there is relatively little appetite to purchase commercial property in Wabamun at present. This notion is supported by a review of commercial real estate listings in Wabamun. On

November 22, 2023, there were three commercial buildings available for sale in Wabamun, these had each been on the market for between 54 days and 99 days.

Recently, Wabamun has lacked the population growth to drive commercial activity in the community. However, Parkland County has been developing a regional vision document which outlines a plan for redevelopment in and around Wabamun, discussed further in section 7.1.3, intended to drive growth in the area. This may spur future demand for residential and commercial real estate in the region.

7.1.3 Wabamun Vision and Growth Outlook

Developed by Parkland County, the Wabamun Area Vision outlines a 50-year concept for growth around Wabamun Lake. The vision identifies the Hamlet of Wabamun as the best place in which to focus residential and commercial growth in the area. The following provides a high-level summary of the Vision document as it pertains to this analysis.

7.1.3.1 Wabamun Vision Summary

Potential Wabamun area developments identified in the plan include new pathways around the lake and a revitalized waterfront area in the hamlet. Focusing on the hamlet allows the County to leverage existing infrastructure and mitigate fragmented growth throughout the area.

According to the Vision document, the forecasted market demand is for approximately 6,240 single family housing units in the Wabamun/Parkland County Trade Area by 2050. An estimated 15% of this demand is expected to come from outside of the Trade Area (i.e., seasonal residents/second homes). Further to this, the Vision projects that targeted development will result in between one-third and two-thirds of these residences being built in Wabamun Hamlet or other communities around Wabamun Lake. Analysis to confirm these estimates is outside the scope of this report. However, the Alberta Regional Dashboard indicates that, in 2020, there were 303 dwelling units in the Village of Wabamun. If the forecasted housing demand is accurate, it would likely more than triple the number of existing dwellings in Wabamun, with a corresponding increase in population.

If such a population increase were to occur, it would likely drive the demand for and price of real estate in and around Wabamun. It would also drive increased demand for local amenities/businesses and municipal services.

7.1.3.2 Wabamun Vision Engagement

During the development of the Wabamun Vision document, its authors undertook several rounds of engagement with residents of Wabamun Hamlet and surrounding area. Through this engagement, several key needs or wants were identified by Wabamun residents including:

- A desire to repurpose several of the buildings being analysed for this report, including Jubilee Hall, the old firehall, and the Civic Centre, for community uses.
- Improved opportunity for sports and recreation.
 - More sports and community facilities.
 - More recreation opportunities, especially for youth and seniors.
- Increased enforcement of traffic, boating, and littering.

7.1.4 The Wabamun Public Library

The potential for moving the Wabamun Public Library to a new, improved location was an issue raised by Parkland County project representatives and by several stakeholders during engagement. The following section provides an overview of library services, as well as the challenges related to a potential move and options for where to move.

7.1.4.1 Library Operations

There are five public libraries operated by the Parkland County Library Board, including the Wabamun Public Library. Currently, the Wabamun Public Library operates 9am-5pm Tuesday through Thursday each week, although it was noted that in the past the library was open five days a week so there is the potential for increasing hours of operation.

In addition to offering reading spaces and books for loan, the Wabamun library also offers numerous programs and events to the public. Many such events occur during the evening or other off-hours. Typically, there is one program or event offered per week with one of these each month being a larger event. The regular, or smaller, events (e.g., a games night or art night) often host in the range of 10-12 individuals, while larger events (e.g., a movie night or pet event) may host upwards of 50 or 60 individuals. When library staff anticipate that an event will draw a larger crowd (i.e., 20 or more adults), they typically book space elsewhere, usually the upstairs of Jubilee Hall or, on occasion, the Civic Centre.

Library representatives state that the library has experienced increased usership over the past year or two and that they expect this trend to continue. They suggested that reasons for this include an increasing number of people, especially families, moving into the community and that new links to and cross-promotion with Parkland County post-absorption provides increased promotion for events and is drawing people in from outside of Wabamun. Attendees at recent events include individuals from as far away as Edmonton and Spruce Grove.

7.1.4.2 Current Library Facility

As noted in section 4.2, the Wabamun Public Library is currently housed in the lower level of Jubilee Hall, where it has its own kitchen facility and washroom. The library also has its own separate entrance with a ramp to facilitate wheelchair access.

Although the facility is relatively small and lacks windows, library representatives report that staff and patrons are generally happy with their existing location and that it meets their needs. However, they also noted the following challenges:

- There is wheelchair access, but some residents (generally younger children and those with electric wheelchairs – i.e., people with less physical strength) reportedly rarely or never visit the library because they have difficulty navigating the ramp and/or opening the heavy, manual door.
- Although the washroom can be accessed by wheelchair, it is difficult and often requires assistance from a staff member, meaning that it is not truly accessible.
- The library can become very noisy if the upstairs of Jubilee Hall is in use at the same time.
- The present building lighting is not adequate for reading or crafting.
- The relatively small size of the library means that they often need to book space at other facilities for their larger events or programs.

7.1.4.3 Potential New Library Location

Wabamun Public Library representatives were clear in their message that they are satisfied with their existing library location/facility. Although they see the potential benefit of a larger and/or newer facility, it is very important that they do not lose certain important features that are currently available to them. The following critical features were identified:

- Accessibility – library staff and board have placed a priority on making physical access to the library and its services available to all members of the public.
- Kitchen area – access to a kitchen is important for many library programs and events in addition to serving as an employee break room.
- Separate entrance – in keeping with accessibility and the offering of off-hour programs and events, it is important to have an entrance that the public can use to access the library and can be controlled and monitored by library staff.
- Washroom – necessary for comfort and accessibility at the library and its programs or events.

7.2 Potential Changes and Impacts

Each of the five Wabamun facilities in question are currently being used to support the operations of at least one municipal department. Some facilities are used extensively, while others are only partially or periodically used. Table 7-2 outlines the existing users, the annual cost to operate and maintain, and pertinent engagement notes related to each facility. The balance of this section summarizes potential courses of action for each facility and the expected impacts of those actions.

Table 7-2 Summary of Wabamun Facility Users, Costs, and other Considerations

Facility	Existing Users	Total Annual Costs	Total Gross Annual Costs Per Sqft	Notes/Considerations
Civic Centre	FCSS	\$248,742	\$46.06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facility is underutilized Facility has symbolic value to residents of Wabamun
Jubilee Hall	Library	\$303,950	\$38.47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facility has symbolic value to residents of Wabamun Is frequently rented by the public for events
Old Firehall	Enforcement, Fire Services, Horticulture (Ag)	\$163,076	\$30.20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facility is well-suited to the needs of Enforcement services, it's loss would likely decrease the quality and efficiency of services
Old WTP	Sewer and Water	\$50,322	\$43.38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building has limited utility, but it serves a unique function that would be challenging to replace
Public Works	Parks, Public Works (Roads)	\$79,076	\$12.17 ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of facility would likely have negative impact on efficiency of operations for Parks and Public Works

7.2.1 Civic Centre

The Civic Centre is generally underutilized at present. Although several municipal and other groups periodically book space in the building for meetings or events, the only regular user group is FCSS. It presents the second-largest total annual cost among the five facilities reviewed for this study, although it has the highest cost per square foot. Disposing of the facility would decrease County costs while likely having minimal impact on existing municipal operations.

However, the general consensus among stakeholders is that, rather than disposition of the building, additional users should be brought into the facility. The building has symbolic value to Wabamun residents and is situated in the town centre; with additional users or amenities it could potentially serve as a community hub drawing residents and visitors into the heart of Wabamun. Several stakeholders suggested the Civic Centre as a suitable new location for housing the Wabamun Public Library. The Wabamun Public Library is one of the most popular amenities in Wabamun and often acts as a sort of community gathering place. Its programs are well attended by locals and often draw in visitors from outside of Parkland County. Although the library's current home in the basement of Jubilee Hall is adequate, a new location with increased space and improved accessibility may allow the library to further enhance its offerings. Moving the library into the Civic Centre would not only provide the library with more space, it would bring significant foot traffic into the Civic Centre and could serve as a stepping stone for transforming the facility into a hub of community services.

There is little consensus on whether the library would be better placed on the upper or lower floor of the Civic Centre. There are advantages and disadvantages to either relocation option, which are presented in Table 7-3. In

general, proponents of moving the library to the lower floor of the Civic Centre cited the opportunity for the library to design/develop the currently undeveloped basement space to meet their needs and expressed a desire to leave the building's upper floor available for rent/use by other organizations or new business ventures. Those in favour of placing the library on the main floor felt that this may be a less costly and simpler move, as the main floor already provides good accessibility along with access to a kitchen and washroom.

Table 7-3 Advantages and Challenges Related to Relocating Wabamun Public Library into the Wabamun Civic Centre

Floor	Advantages	Challenges
Lower/Basement Floor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plenty of space. Opportunity for library to design/develop the space to their specifications. Would leave upstairs available for other groups or potential business interests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently accessible only by stairs. Would require installation of an elevator or construction of direct, external entrance. Significant capital investment to develop with kitchen, washrooms, and address accessibility.
Upper/Main Floor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More space for the library than current facility provides. No/few accessibility issues. Library has funds in place to facilitate the move immediately. Access to meeting/board room could be maintained for other user groups. Library could still move downstairs at a later time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upstairs space no longer available for potential business ventures. Engineering study has confirmed that either difficult to manage and enforce occupancy limits or costly structural upgrades are needed in order to accommodate the weight of the books/library.

7.2.1.1 Wabamun Library Structural Report

During engagement, there was some concern expressed about whether the upper floor of the civic centre had the structural capacity to support the weight of the library. As such, the County contracted ISL to conduct a structural assessment. Indeed, the assessment found that the Civic Centre's main floor was designed to carry a live load of 4.8 kPa, while building code requirements state that a building structural system must be designed to carry a live load of 7.2 kPa (a 50% increase) for a library. The ISL assessment does suggest that the Civic Centre could potentially support the library without implementing structural upgrades by arranging the bookshelves in one of the recommended patterns and adhering to strict occupancy restrictions. These occupancy restrictions would not only limit the number of occupants, but the location of those occupants in relation to the bookshelves (i.e., ensuring that the combined weight of shelves and occupants does not exceed the maximum). ISL also suggested three options for improving the building's structural capacity by reinforcing the main floor framing and assessed the cost and feasibility of installing an elevator and accommodating the library in the basement. In total, the assessment presents five potential options for accommodating the Wabamun Public Library within the Wabamun

Civic Centre. Outlines the estimated costs associated with each option. Full details regarding each option can be seen in the original ISL report, but a brief description of each option is as follows:

- Option 1A - Incorporating the library on the main floor without any structural improvements by limiting occupant and bookshelf loads. Nichols notes that, although this is definitively the lowest cost option, the practice of enforcing the required occupant load may be difficult and not practical to implement.
- Option 1B - Incorporating the library on the main floor by reinforcing the main floor framing. There are three Flooring Reinforcement Options (FROs) suggested, with some advantages and disadvantages as follows:
 - FRO 1 – is the least costly FRO option, but results in reduced open space in the basement.
 - FRO 2 – leaves the basement space open as originally designed, but is the most costly option.
 - FRO 3 – combines elements from FRO 1 and FRO 2, offering costs and benefits in between the first two options.
- Option 2 - Incorporating the library in the basement, including the installation of an elevator in the existing elevator shaft. ISL notes that if this is the chosen option, further work would need to be done, involving intrusive investigation (removing portions of the wall covering) to verify the elevator structure and load capacity.

Table 7-4 Accommodating the Wabamun Public Library in the Civic Centre, Estimated Costs for Each Option Suggested by ISL

Option	Construction Cost Estimate ¹	Construction Contingency (20%) ¹	Total Construction Cost ¹	Consulting Allowance (15%) ²	Total Cost ²
1A	\$75,000	\$15,000	\$90,000	\$13,500	\$103,500
1B - FRO 1	\$190,000	\$38,000	\$228,000	\$34,200	\$262,200
1B - FRO 2	\$300,000	\$60,000	\$360,000	\$54,000	\$414,000
1B - FRO 3	\$205,000	\$41,000	\$246,000	\$36,900	\$282,900
2	\$150,000	\$30,000	\$180,000	\$27,000	\$207,000

¹ Construction cost estimates presented are those shown in the ISL Wabamun Library Structural Report.

² The consulting allowance and total cost values were calculated by Nichols based upon suggestion in the ISL Wabamun Library Structural Report to add a 15% allowance for consulting fees.

Source: Adapted from the ISL Wabamun Library Structural Report.

7.2.2 Jubilee Hall

Jubilee Hall is the largest of the five Wabamun facilities and also presents the largest gross annual cost (although it is less costly than either the Civic Centre or Old Water Treatment Plant on a per square foot basis). Although the Hall does generate revenue through rentals, this does not significantly offset the cost of operations (Hall revenue in 2023 was less than 5% of the total projected future annual costs). The facility is also not used by any municipal departments, although the Wabamun Public Library is currently housed on the lower floor of the building. Given its relative cost and lack of municipal use, it would make economic sense for the County to dispose of Jubilee Hall. However, the hall does serve a community purpose, being frequently rented by members of the public for events such as weddings and funerals and, like the Civic Centre, has symbolic value to residents of Wabamun.

During engagement, it was suggested that the County could gift Jubilee Hall to the community of Wabamun to be run by a local group. The County does not own and operate other community halls in its jurisdiction; rather, it provides a variety of grants to community groups who each operate their local hall. Specified grants include:

- an operating grant up to \$4570 to offset the costs of utilities, janitorial, lawn maintenance, and safety inspections;
- an outdoor amenity grant, each amenity has a different max but covers the cost with maintaining items such as playgrounds and ball diamonds;
- 100% payment of the insurance premiums for the hall;
- A minor sustainability grant, of up to 75% of the cost of the project to a maximum of \$10,000 in one year with a 5-year maximum overall award of \$30,000 per community association, to assist with minor capital costs related to preventative maintenance, renovation, or code upgrades; and
- A major sustainability grant, up to 50% of the cost of the project with a 10-year maximum of \$150,000 per Community Association, to assist community leagues with major capital costs of the preventative maintenance, or renovation, or code upgrades.

Table 7-5 outlines current annual costs to the County related to Jubilee Hall as well as the projected annual cost, in grant money, if ownership and operation of the hall were transferred to the community of Wabamun. It shows that the County could save nearly \$260,000 annually in operating and capital costs by gifting Jubilee Hall. Nichols notes that due to several large capital expenditures required by the Hall in coming years (i.e., roof replacement, fire panel, HVAC replacement, and drainage work) the community group taking over Jubilee Hall may initially require additional financial supports from the County. However, even if the County were to provide all capital expenditures over the next 10 years, it would still stand to save approximately \$130,000 per year in operating costs.

Table 7-5 County Costs Related to Jubilee Hall

	Annual Net Operating Cost	Annual Capital Cost (10-yr Avg)	Total Annual Cost
County Owns and Operates	\$145,539 ¹	\$146,600	\$292,139 ¹
Community Owns and Operates ²	\$14,140	\$21,000	\$35,140

1 The net operating cost and total annual cost shown here includes an offset of \$11,810 in rental revenue received in 2023.

2 Under a community ownership arrangement, costs to the County reflect Jubilee Hall receiving an assumed 100% of possible grant allocations over the next 10 years.

7.2.3 Old Firehall and Public Works

The Old Firehall and the Public Works building each see regular use from multiple municipal departments and non-profit community groups. These two facilities meet the current needs of their users and are expected to be able to accommodate future needs stemming from the anticipated growth of the Wabamun community. Losing access to either of these facilities would likely have a negative impact on the efficiency of operations for the Enforcement, Horticulture, Parks, and Roads departments, while also possibly decreasing the quality of Enforcement services. Loss of either facility would also cause these departments to seek replacement space at other facilities in the County. On a cost per square foot basis, the Old Firehall and Public Works buildings present the lowest annual cost to the County of the five Wabamun facilities evaluated for this study.

7.2.4 Old Water Treatment Plant

The Old Water Treatment Plant is the smallest of the five Wabamun facilities reviewed for this study and presents the lowest total annual cost, although it is the second most costly facility on a per square foot basis. The only existing user is the municipal Sewer and Water team, which stores some equipment and performs some minor repairs in the building. Although the facility is not extensively used, there may be challenges in finding a new location for the Sewer and Water team to store their large sewer flusher, which requires a loading dock to safely load and unload. It should also be noted that the building is next door to the Water Treatment Plant, which may negatively impact the County's ability to sell the facility.

7.2.5 The Community of Wabamun

The community of Wabamun experiences a relatively high demand for municipal services because it is a population centre, has a relatively older population base, and acts as host to visitors/tourists of Wabamun Lake during the summer. In addition to the municipal services currently being provided, both engagement conducted for this report and earlier engagement presented in the Wabamun Vision document have indicated a demand for further services and amenities within the community. In particular, residents would like to see:

- increased enforcement, particularly of traffic, boating, and littering;
- improved opportunity for sports and recreation; and
- increased access to and/or a wider variety of health services such as dental or chiropractic care in the community.

Some stakeholders have expressed a desire for the County to dispose of those Wabamun facilities that are not being extensively used, which would result in an immediate cost-savings, while others have expressed a desire to repurpose or increase the use of these facilities, citing the likelihood of increased future demand for community real estate and services in the future.

8. Recommendations

When deciding on a course of action for the five Wabamun facilities considered in this report, Parkland County should consider whether it wants to take a longer- or shorter-term approach. In the near term, there appears to be adequate capacity among the Wabamun facilities such that the County could dispose of one or more buildings, thereby reducing operating expenses, with minimal impact on the provision of municipal services. However, the County has also outlined plans to invest \$18 million into the community of Wabamun and surrounding area to revitalize the area and draw in large numbers of new residents and visitors. If the Plan is successful, then Wabamun will grow in size and population, necessitating increased municipal service provision. During engagement, several municipal departments indicated that they would need to add staff and/or equipment as a result of the expected growth. Continued use and support for these facilities generally allows for more efficient services to a County population centre now and will likely provide sufficient space to accommodate the projected future growth in services.

Consideration should also be given to anticipated changes in the Wabamun and area real estate market. Currently, demand for real estate in the region appears to be low; while the projected growth outlined in the Wabamun Vision document suggests much higher demand for real estate in the future. Sale of any of these facilities now may net a relatively low return, while the cost to repurchase or replace them in the future, as municipal operations need to expand, may be significantly higher. Again, the disposition of facilities now may provide a short-term savings but result in significantly higher overall costs in the long term.

8.1 Special Considerations

8.1.1 Facility Demolition/Disposition

To save on costs in the near term, the County could dispose of one or more facilities through sale or demolition and eliminate the need to pay the ongoing maintenance and capital expenses. As discussed above, selling a facility may be challenging as there appears to currently be little demand for real estate in the community of Wabamun, suggesting that it may be difficult to find a buyer and/or the sale price may be relatively low. As an alternative, the County may also consider demolition of one or more facilities. Although this report did not explicitly explore demolition costs, they are known to be highly variable depending on the materials that were used in the building's construction (i.e., asbestos) and may be significant. Additionally, some of the buildings in question may have a large environmental liability attached if they were sold or redeveloped. During engagement, Parkland County staff indicated that there is likely a significant liability associated with the Public Works building, while the other facilities had not been investigated. If the County wishes to further pursue the possible disposition of any facility, the potential environmental liability associated with each should be explored.

8.1.2 Building a New Facility

Given the anticipated growth of Wabamun due to the planned investment into the community by Parkland County, there is likely to be a corresponding need for increased municipal services. As such, if the County does dispose of one or more facilities now, there may be the need to replace that facility in the future. Although the exact construction cost will depend on a variety of variables including market demand (competing cost for land, labour, and materials) and the chosen building design and materials (size, amenities, use of green materials, etc.), Table 8-1 provides an estimated cost to rebuild each facility to the same square footage based on cost per square foot data available from the Altus Group Canadian Cost Guide 2023 for Edmonton. The table shows that the estimated cost to construct a new facility would likely be greater than the total ongoing maintenance and capital expenses

for the next 10 years for Jubilee Hall, the Old Firehall, and the Public Works Shop facilities, while the costs to build a new Civic Centre or building to replace the Old Water Treatment Plant would be relatively less. Nichols notes that opting to build a new facility would allow the County to build to desired specifications and directly meet the needs of the building users. However, it is also worth noting that the costs reflected in the table are exclusive of any demolition or environmental liability costs as discussed above.

Table 8-1 Estimated Replacement Facility Construction Costs¹

Facility	Total Ongoing Capital & Maintenance Costs (10 years)	Square Footage	Estimated Building Construction Cost ²
Civic Centre	\$2,487,420	5,400	\$2,119,500
Jubilee Hall	\$3,039,503	7,900	\$3,713,000
Old Firehall	\$1,630,755	5,399	\$2,465,545
Old WTP	\$503,219	1,160	\$406,000
Public Works - Shop Only	\$790,756	3,600	\$1,260,000

- 1 All costs are presented in \$2023 and do not factor inflation or the cost of land, if needed.
- 2 The Altus Group Canadian Cost Guide provides estimates on a cost per square foot basis based on city on building type. The above table factors pricing based on Edmonton and the building type of Municipal Office (Civic Centre), Multi-use Recreational Centre (Jubilee Hall), Police Station – Regional Detachment (Old Firehall), and Facilities Maintenance Building (Old Water Treatment Plant and Public Works).
- 2 Source: Nichols Calculations based on Altus Group – Canadian Cost Guide 2023.

Given the conditions of the existing facilities, the Old Firehall, Old Water Treatment Plant, and the Public Works buildings would be the best candidates for demolition and later reconstruction. As indicated by the above table, the path of demolition and reconstruction would likely present a significantly greater expense to the County in the long-run and various municipal departments would lose use of these facilities until and if they are rebuilt. However, choosing to rebuild would allow the County, and applicable departments, to have the new building constructed specifically for their needs and wants. Given its current relative lack of use and low cost to rebuild, the Old Water Treatment Plant may be a candidate for demolition and, if needed, later reconstruction. However, the County should investigate the cost of demolition, the potential for environmental liabilities associated with that demolition, and the cost or options to find suitable storage for the County Utilities sewer flusher, which requires a loading ramp to safely load and unload due to its size.

8.2 Facilities

The following table provides a synopsis of the implications to the County of disposing of each of the five Wabamun facilities and a recommendation on how to proceed. In general, most of the Wabamun facilities play a role in existing service provision and have the potential to house new or expanded services and amenities in the future. However, disposing of Jubilee Hall by gifting it to the community of Wabamun would provide a significant cost savings and bring its operation in alignment with that of other community halls in the county.

One key consideration is the possibility of relocating the Wabamun Public Library to the Civic Centre. Doing so offers several potential benefits, but likely requires a significant capital investment (roughly \$200,000 to \$400,000 depending on the chosen option) whether it is moved to the main floor or the basement. Ultimately, the decision of whether and where to move the library depend on the long-term goals of the County and how it plans to otherwise make use of the Civic Centre. Nichols notes that the main floor is likely the superior option in terms of accessibility as it would not be impacted by power outages and/or the elevator otherwise being non-operational. Although the

up-front cost is substantial, once allocated over 10-years, as other facilities capital costs are, the annual expense is likely in the range of \$20,000-\$40,000 and would likely be more than offset by the annual savings achieved through disposal/transfer of the Jubilee Hall.

Table 8-2 Wabamun Facility Recommendations

Facility	Notes	Recommendation
Old Firehall and Public Works	Both facilities are relatively inexpensive to operate and are extensively used by multiple municipal departments. Disposing of either would negatively impact the existing provision of services.	Retain facilities. They are relatively low-cost and play an important role in providing efficient and effective municipal services. These facilities provide good value for their cost. Consider minor upgrades to make them more comfortable for employees and further improve efficiencies.
Civic Centre	The facility is costly and underutilized but is in generally good condition, is centrally located, and has symbolic value to community. Several stakeholders, and the Wabamun Vision document, state a desire for a community hub and service area in the Hamlet.	Move additional users into the facility, including relocation of Wabamun Public Library to either the main floor or basement, and consider development of basement. Selling this facility will save money now, but doing so may negatively impact community spirit and replacing it in the future may present a higher overall cost.
Jubilee Hall	Facility is the largest and most costly. It is well used by the public and has symbolic value to the community but serves no municipal servicing purpose.	Gift the hall to the community and provide operational grants to support it as is done in other Parkland County communities. This will provide up to \$257,000 in annual cost savings.
Old Water Treatment Plant	Primary municipal use is to store a large piece of heavy equipment for Utilities. This equipment requires a loading dock to safely load and unload.	Explore possible environmental liability associated with the facility and potential for moving Utilities storage elsewhere.

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