

# Family village concept pitched

FAMILY CIRCLE ASSOCIATION SEEKS \$300,000 IN ASSISTANCE FROM CITY OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS

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Herald photo by David Rossiter

Celeste Pryde works in the weavers room of the Bowman Arts Centre. The building could temporarily house several community agencies once a new community arts centre is completed.

City council members are being asked to buy into the concept of a major downtown facility which would bring more than a dozen family support agencies together under one roof.

The Lethbridge Family Circle Association is seeking \$300,000 over the next three years for detailed planning and design work for a new 75,000-square-foot family village complex the organization hopes to build in the near future. Association Treasurer Greg Schmidt presented the request Monday when council members met as city finance committee to listen to proposals for consideration in the city's 2011-2020 capital spending plan.

"We want to create a community within a community," he told the committee. "This is going to improve outcomes and make healthier families."

Having the group's 13 local support agencies located together in a family village would drastically improve the logistics for the majority of client families who must currently travel on foot or by bus each day to get from one

agency to another, he said.

Many of those agencies, he said, are currently operating out of cramped quarters where offices share space with storage, laundry and lunchroom facilities.

The planning phase would also help identify potential private and government funding sources for the project, which is modelled on similar initiatives in cities such as Saskatoon, Calgary and Grande Prairie.

"At the end of three years, we would like to be in a position where, either through . . . P3 partnerships or other partners or grants that may come about, we can put a shovel in the ground," he said.

The association believes it makes the most financial sense to own the facility.

"If we're looking at 75,000 square feet, to do leasehold improvements for all the different agencies, we would be looking at least 10-and-a-half to 11 million dollars," he said. "To do that on somebody else's building doesn't make

good financial sense."

Schmidt told the committee, however, that the 12,000-square-foot Bowman Arts Centre — slated to become vacant once a new community arts facility is built on the former site of the downtown IGA store — could serve as a temporary joint home while a permanent facility was being built.

"The Bowman Arts Centre, we feel, is a good option to meet the immediate needs of agencies that are in a space crunch and also to prove that we have the ability to operate a co-location facility," he said.

Schmidt acknowledged the association has its eye on the city-owned former Bridge Inn property downtown on 1 Avenue South as a potential permanent site for the family village.

"It's a site that would definitely, easily meet the needs of our building plan. There are other sites, but we would have to do some adjusting to the sites," he said.

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## Family Village Tabled For Finance Committee; Group Makes \$300,000 Ask.

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Posted at 10:45:46 AM

Source: Stacey Lee - Country 95 News

# Family Village



Presented by:  
Lethbridge Family Circle Association



## Benefits to Agencies & Funders:

- Cost savings
- Co-ordinated services
- Co-ordinated funding and fundraising
- Accessibility of services
- Inter-agency interaction
- Meeting spaces available
- Lends to sustainability



## Family Village



Design is exclusive intellectual property of Alvin Reinhard Fritz Architect Inc.

**LETHBRIDGE:** Treasurer of the Lethbridge Family Circle Association Greg Schimdt asked members of the city's Finance Committee Monday (April 26, 2010) for \$300,000 which his group would use to fund the planning of a 75,000 square foot one-stop-not-for-profit shop.

The massive "Family Village" complex would house the Interfaith Food Bank, and other agencies such as Lethbridge Family Services, BLAST, the Canadian Paraplegic Association, Behavioral Solutions, the Family Ties Association, and Volunteer Lethbridge.

It would boast two levels of underground parking, more than adequate storage space for an expanding Food Bank, Office Space galore, Commercial spaces for revenue generation, and a multi-use residential complex on the third floor.

The funds would cover the costs of detailed design, scouting of potential sites, nail down construction costs, find partnerships, and applying for provincial funding. "At this time we thought it would be prudent to make sure that we've got a solid business plan, to make sure that we've got all of our funding options covered and available to us. We realize that we have a financial/economic situation right now, and that there isn't a lot of money flowing for a project this size. But, we thought this is a better way to go about it and in the cycle, you never know, it might come about in a year or two."

In his presentation to the committee Schmidt was firm on association's intent to build a new facility on land it purchases. "We are looking at a facility of about 75,000 square feet, which will incorporate all of the space we need for non-profit agencies who are providing services to the whole mainstream community. In addition we want to add some multi-use housing components into it, and create a Community Village."

The idea of co-locating all of these agencies into one place will benefit those who access the services, but the agencies themselves. "For children and families who are experiencing a need for services or connection in their community, they are going all over." Schmidt says while services such as McMann Youth and Family Services and the Canadian Paraplegic Society are located downtown and close to amenities such as public transit, others are spread across the community. He used the Interfaith Food Bank, Lethbridge Family Services, and Volunteer Lethbridge as prime examples of those services which are sprinkled around the downtown core.

Schmidt added that following the three planning process, should his association's request be realized, he's hoping to be able to get construction underway. "At the end of three years we would like to be in a position where, we through partnerships... we're able to put a shovel in the ground and build this building. If we're looking at a building with 75,000 square feet, to do lease hold improvement to meet the needs of all the different agencies, we would be looking at least \$10.5 - \$11 million. To do that to somebody else's building doesn't make good financial sense, especially if we're going to be accessing fundraising dollars and community funds."

He also made reference to the vacant property on 1st avenue south, located directly across from Park Place Mall, which used to boast The Bridge Inn, The Cecil Hotel, and the Arlington Hotel. "Everything is on our radar. It just happened to be that [that location] would definitely easily meet the needs of our building plan. There are other sites, but we would have to do some adjusting."

A secondary request to the committee from Schmidt, who asked that the Bowman Building located on 5th avenue and Stafford Drive south be temporarily leased to those bursting not-for-profit's. "[The building] would meet the needs of agencies who are in a space crunch right now, and need to do something quick. I'll use the example of the Family Centre. They needed to move out [of the Old Courthouse], so they've now got a space at the Lethbridge Centre Mall. We don't want to put our agencies in that position again. The Bowman Arts Centre, we feel, is a good option to meet the needs of agencies in need, and to prove that we have the ability to operate a co-location facility."

The Treasurer cited similar efforts in communities such as Fort McMurray, Saskatoon, Grand Prairie, Toronto, and Jasper as learning opportunities.

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## **Lounge 94.1**

### **Family Circle Wants City Funds**

*Apr 27/10* - The Lethbridge Family Circle Association has approached the City for money to develop a new headquarters. Representatives from the non-profit organization came before City Council's Finance Committee meeting Monday afternoon asking for 300-thousand dollars from the Capital Improvement Program. Family Circle Association Treasurer Greg Schmidt says the facility would include space for several agencies in order to share resources. Lethbridge Family Circle provides programs and services for individuals, children and families. City Council will consider the association's request next month when the capital program is given final approval.

