

## **Q 2. Why did the Town decide to lease space in the new Community Learning Centre, rather than construct its own building on Town-owned land?**

- Town Council and Administration believe the Town's involvement as a tenant in the new Community Learning Centre is an important investment in future economic growth and development in Ponoka. Council and Administration anticipate the Community Learning Centre project will become a strong catalyst for development and growth in Ponoka, which could expand the Town's municipal tax base.
- There is potential for further development on that five-acre site. A second major project on that site was announced last fall - a one-storey care home of about 5,000 square feet on the northwest corner of the site for individuals with development disabilities. The care home is being built by the Lacombe Action Group for the Handicapped and will accommodate up to eight residents.
- The Community Learning Centre is anticipated to become a 'northern anchor' to the Downtown that spurs additional redevelopment and growth in the area, similar to the way IGA anchors the south end of the Downtown.
- Ponoka Mayor Rick Bonnett has stated that while Ponoka has enjoyed the lowest property taxes in central Alberta for a municipality of its size for many years, those low taxes do not attract economic growth.

"To generate new growth and development in our community, we have to invest in critical projects like this one, which will bring new access to post-secondary education to Town, and attract a new developer to Ponoka that is very motivated and willing to invest in our community. That is why the Town believes the lease costs for this new building are an important investment in Ponoka's future," says Mayor Bonnett.

- The Town's involvement in the project as a tenant created incentive for the developer to move quickly to finalize the purchase of the old hospital site and invest in redeveloping the five-acre property. Without the Town's involvement, development of the site would almost certainly have taken longer to occur.
- If the Town were to build its own facility, it would likely be on Town-owned land, not the old hospital site, and the project would take longer to build. That is because the Town must initiate a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process to hire the right expertise to design and manage construction of the building. That would delay the project timeline, which would have meant working with potentially higher construction prices.