

City of Palmer Public Library Needs Assessment

Palmer, Alaska

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Wolf Architecture
610 S. Bailey, #1
Palmer, AK 99645

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Introduction

The Palmer Public Library was constructed in 1984 and is the largest Public Library serving the Matanuska Susitna Borough and employs a full time staff of five, including one fully accredited librarian.

The population of the borough has tripled since the library was constructed straining the capacity of the library to serve the needs of this area. The City of Palmer engaged Wolf Architecture to assess the space needs of Palmer Public Library and evaluate the impacts and feasibility of increasing the building size required to house the forecasted needs. The methodology for the analysis included the following:

- Interviews with the Director of the Palmer Public Library, Ms. Pat Kilmain,
- Existing facility information assembled from original construction documents, site visits, and public library data bases
- Population data from the U.S. Census Bureau
- Population projections from the U.S. Census Bureau
- Planning tools from Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Public Library Development (PLD): Public Library Space Needs Planning Outline by Anders C. Dahlgren.
- Programmatic and Schematic Design Analysis

The needs assessment data is based on extrapolating current U.S. Census Bureau estimations for community growth to estimate the optimum size and program for a library located in a community of comparable size. The existing library program was analyzed in relationship to the PLD space planning outline and then adjusted with the input of the Library Director.

The goal of this analysis was to ensure the Palmer Public Library usage patterns match the national average while allowing for localized adjustment of programmatic parameters on a localized basis. The fine tuning of the program included functions such as the space and system allocations for public access Internet stations. Media and technology adjustments considered included the migration away from magnetic media like tapes to CDs and DVDs, insofar as those trends can be predicted. The programmatic adjustments were based the Ms. Kilmain's knowledge of the local demographics and program needs if they varied from the national model.

Any addition to the existing facility to house the new and expanded functions must take into consideration, potential disruption to the existing facility, the configuration of the existing facility, the condition of existing spaces and systems, accessibility, interior work flow and traffic/parking patterns and requirements.



Summary of findings:

Palmer Public Library facility is currently undersized to meet the needs of the current population base. Current deficiencies include undersized support areas including receiving and storage areas, staff work stations, staff lounge, staff offices, and restroom facilities. Staff parking in the rear of the facility is limited to two vehicles which is insufficient for current staffing levels.



The building is currently utilized at full capacity, with no current alternatives for expansion or underutilized areas. The facility does not have capacity to meet anticipated community growth, and the building layout makes it difficult to make internal adjustments to proportions of collections within the library. An example of this limitation would be that the children's collection cannot be expanded by reducing the adult proportion; neither can the reserved collection reasonably expand by reducing any other sections.

Community Profile

Community and Service Area Profile and Population

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough, within the heart of south-central Alaska, encompasses more than 24,000 square miles (about the size of the state of West Virginia). The City of Palmer is located at the southeastern quadrant of the borough and serves the library needs for the surrounding population within the greater Palmer area.

The Municipality of Anchorage, Upper Cook Inlet, and Knik Arm delineate the Borough's southern border. The Borough was incorporated as a second class general law borough in 1964 and has a manager form of government. It includes the three incorporated cities of Houston, Palmer, and Wasilla.

*Census data obtained from the Matanuska Susitna Borough indicates a population of 33,552 in 1984, approximately the year the Palmer Public Library Facility was constructed. The next ten years saw a population increase of approximately 14,000 new residents bringing the population to 47,636. 2004 census data reports a current Mat-Su Borough population of 69,158; an increase of 31 percent. Current population projections show expected sustained yearly population increases in the MSB to remain between 3%- 5% per year until approximately 2010 and then level off at around a 2-3% growth rate. It is expected the population the Mat-Su borough will increase to around 85,000 residents by 2010, nearly a 300 percent total population increase in a mere 30 years.

City of Palmer - Palmer Public Library Service Area

Palmer is a community of 5,474 residents, 42 miles north of Anchorage, located within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, with over 65,000 people. The Greater Palmer area has roughly 15,000 people who work, shop, or travel through the city on a regular basis, with significant summer increases due to tourism.



The city of Palmer has experienced a sustained rate of growth which has recently been increasing. Conservative estimates put population increases at approximately 3% per year which, combined with planned annexations, are projected to increase the City of Palmer's population base to near 10,000 people by 2023. This is a 150% increase in a 30 year period illustrating the need for an increase in the size and capacity of the Main Public Library located in the Core Area of the borough.

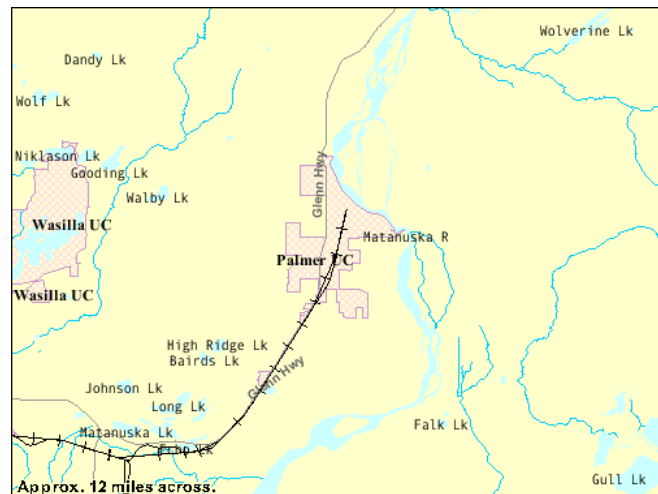
The non-City of Palmer resident service population ratio of four to one is projected to increase slightly to about four and one quarter to one.

The City of Palmer



The City of Palmer population is projected to increase anywhere from 27% or to 6,940, to 82%, or to 10,000 over the next 20 years.

The Greater Palmer Area



The Greater Palmer area population is projected to increase by 33% from 27,370 to 36,393 over the next 20 years.

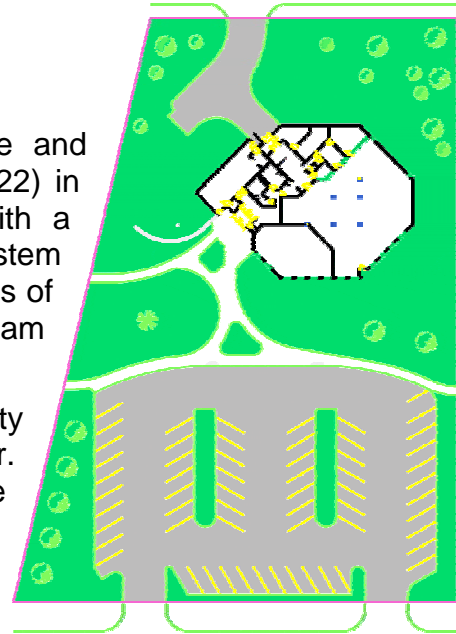


Palmer Public Library

Existing Facility

The existing building is a single level wood frame and masonry structure approximately 12,000 sq. ft. (11,922) in area. The building has a masonry foundation with a concrete slab on grade floor system. The roof system consists of single span wood joists comprising in series of shed and hip roof forms covered with a standing seam metal roof

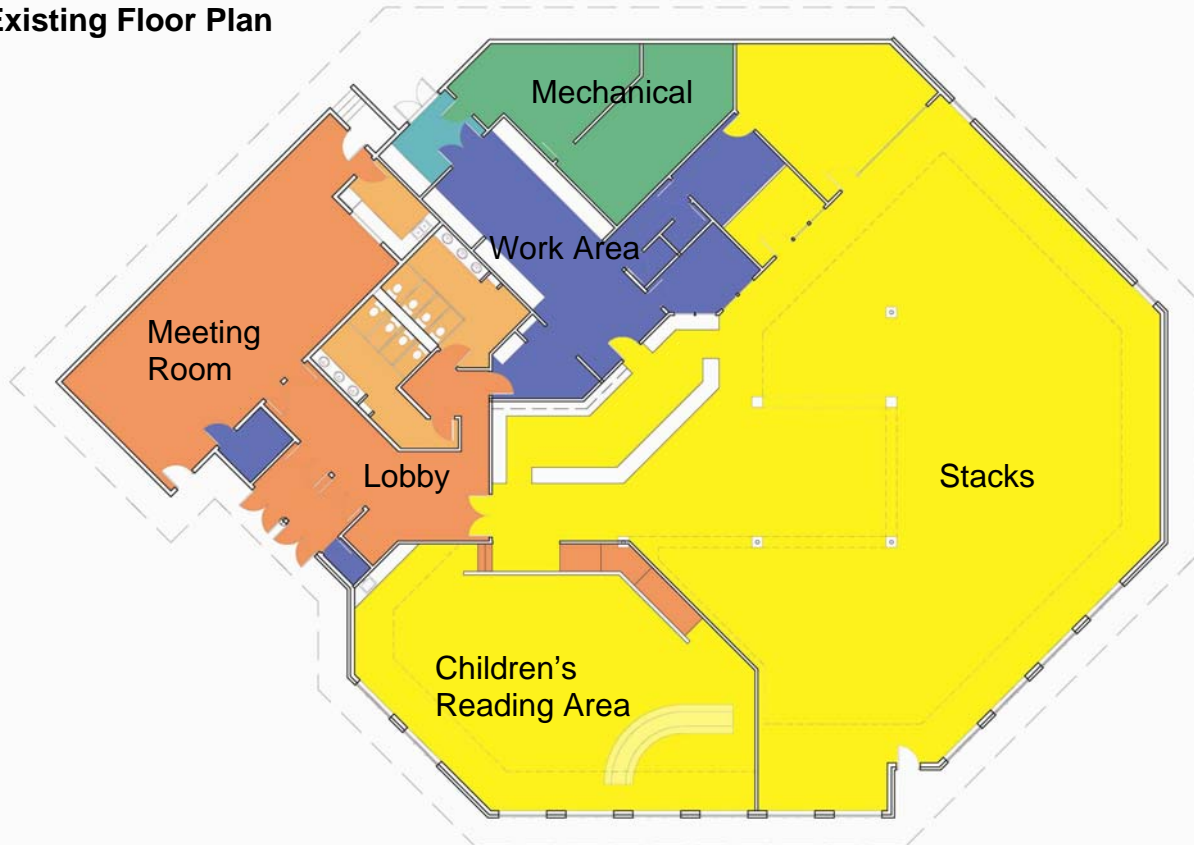
The library site is located on a public use (P) property within the central business district of the City of Palmer. The property is 108,438 s.f., or approximately the size of ½ a typical city block. The site is centrally located within the city and at the west end of the central commons. The Library has the potential to provide a terminus to the main east/west street Evergreen Avenue.









Existing Site Plan





An existing parking area is located to the south of the library building and contains 52 paved parking spaces, including 6 dedicated accessible parking spaces. Any increase in building area will require an increase in the number of parking stalls.





Existing Floor Plan



Facility Deficiencies

<p>1.</p>	<p>The design of the existing building does not appear to readily accommodate an addition. Any substantial addition will change the building's massing and exterior appearance.</p>	
<p>2.</p>	<p>The areas currently designated for use by children are insufficient in area to provide for either reading or craft based programs. Specifically, the existing built in seating is too small to accommodate reading program and the craft area is inadequate in size for other children related activities. (See related item 12)</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Storage at the entry for patron belongings such as backpacks is inadequate in size and is not secure.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>The circulation desk is undersized to accommodate the current staff. The work area behind the desk is also too small. The entry area is occasionally congested due to the proximity of the circulation desk to the front door.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>The staff and volunteer work area (531 sq.ft.) is undersized to efficiently complete tasks like book repair and sorting. Multi tasking efforts in this area cannot be achieved.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Office areas are inadequate and undersized. Due to lack of space offices have expanded into spaces designed for patrons and books.</p>	

<p>7.</p>	<p>The Staff Lounge (114 sq. ft.) can accommodate a maximum of three people. The current staffing level for the Library including volunteers is 11 persons.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>The receiving area (106 sq. ft.) is too small to accommodate incoming and outgoing book shipments. The room is generally always full and many book boxes sit in the work room.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>The meeting room (864 sq. ft. useable) is not large enough to accommodate many groups who would like to utilize the facility. Additionally, the lack of support storage for chairs, tables, and equipment require these items be stored in the meeting room further reducing the amount of people who can be served by the meeting room. Additional storage concerns in this area include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The audio-video cart is frequently stored in the Kitchen because the Kitchen is secure. b. The storage area beside the meeting room is currently used to keep retired books pending sale or disposal. 	
<p>10.</p>	<p>The facility has no small or medium conference space. A space to accommodate ten to twenty people is frequently requested. Such a conference room would be multi-functional and could function as a staff meeting area, a volunteer meetings or a classroom.</p>	
<p>11.</p>	<p>The existing Entry Lobby area is adequately sized but is underutilized due to its configuration and location. It is the only such area in the facility.</p>	

<p>12.</p>	<p>The sink and cabinet area in the Children's Reading Area was designed as a craft area. There is not enough room for crafts in this space; crafts are typically done in the Meeting Area.</p>	
<p>13.</p>	<p>Library seating of 30 to 50 seats generally accommodates patron needs, except for specific peak times and public access Internet stations.</p> <p>a. The Library currently has 8 public access computer stations plus 4 card catalog stations. At peak times the stations are often full and patrons must wait to use them. A significantly increased need for additional public access Internet stations is forecasted with some of these stations equipped to accommodate for training staff and library patrons.</p> <p>b. The currently study area consists of open tables only which provide little privacy. Individual study carousels are not provided.</p>	
<p>14.</p>	<p>Library storage is inadequate throughout the facility. Every available location has been commandeered for storage in some cases reducing circulation resulting in a loss of efficiency.</p>	
<p>15.</p>	<p>There is inadequate staff parking at the rear (North) staff parking area.</p>	

Projected Library Space Needs (including Service Parameters)

1. Collections:

The Wisconsin Division for Libraries and Community Learning Workbook projects Palmer Library collection department at more than double the existing based on service populations (WI Projected volumes: 109,543; current volumes: 48,600), requiring 9,859 square feet to house. Annual expenditures on the collection total \$33,000. Projected space requirements for the collection should be based on the most probable projected collection. The most probable projected collection provides an increase in the same proportion as the design population increase of 33%, or 64,638 volumes. Accounting for 10% of the collection typically in circulation, and allowing one square foot for every 10 volumes, the projected collection would require 5,820 square feet to house.

a. Special Collections:

- i. Periodicals:** Palmer Library's periodical collection is petite. WI workbook projections for 358 square feet will adequately house the collection.
 - ii. Non-print material:** These materials include CD's, DVD's, Audio and VCR tapes. The trend toward smaller non-print media is expected to continue. Audio cassettes and VCR tapes are being replaced by CDs and DVDs. Non-print media stores more information in less physical space and space requirements for non-print media will not expand as dramatically as other space requirements. One square foot for every ten items included area for the library's collection of non-print media and patron use of non-print media which is expected to increase over time.
- 2. Reader Seating:** Projected reader seating of 60 seats allows for 30 square feet per seat. This ratio correlates to 1,800 square feet for reader seating.
- 3. Public Access Internet Stations:** Allowing 50 square feet for each public Access Internet Station, and projecting a need for 27 stations correlates to 1,350 square feet. It is typical for these stations to be utilized by a single individual or by small groups. Group training for up to 10 staff or library patrons will be provided on some of these stations..
- 4. Staff Workstations and Work Space:** Projecting 15 workstations with minimal sizing of 125 square feet per workstation requires 1,875 square feet for Staff Work Area; three and one half times the existing area. Although the existing spaces is undersized this area projection appears overly generous. After consulting with Director Kilmain the project has been down size to 1,365 s.f. which essential doubles the existing work area.
- 5. Meeting Space:**
 - a.** Meeting room space may be accommodated in the existing room if adequate associated storage is provided. However, the library director has requested the meeting room be doubled in area to accommodate larger groups.



- b. Conference Room: A conference room accommodating 18 people requires 450 square feet. Library staff sees a frequent need for a meeting room of this size.
 - c. Story area with space for crafts: The need for space where children can listen to stories and participate in crafts and other reading incentive activities is anticipated to increase. A space accommodating 80 people requires 1,250 square feet. Acoustic separation is preferred for this area.
 - d. Computer training lab: Ten computer stations oriented for instruction requires 580 square feet.
- 6. Special Use Space:** This space allocation accommodates photocopiers, index tables or stations, pamphlet and newspaper racks, maps and other special collections for public use. The actual space may not be in a single contiguous area but may be a collection of smaller areas. The WI moderate needs projection provides an allocation equal to 20% of the main library space projections. This translates to 3,011 square feet.
- 7. Non-assignable Space:** This space allocation accommodates mechanical rooms, janitor closets, storage rooms, vestibules, corridors, stairwells, and restrooms. The WI workbook typically undersizes this requirement. We tweaked the formula to allow 33%, thus accommodating accessibility and other typical requirements. This increased allocation may yet undersize the storage requirements of the facility.
- 8. The total projected space needs** of 24,084 square feet exceeds the existing facility's 11,816 square feet by 12,268 square feet.

Cost Estimate

Wolf Architecture recommends obtaining a total project cost estimate for each valid option by a professional cost estimator. The estimate should include construction costs, furnishings and equipment, project management, design costs, and other costs associated with each option considered.

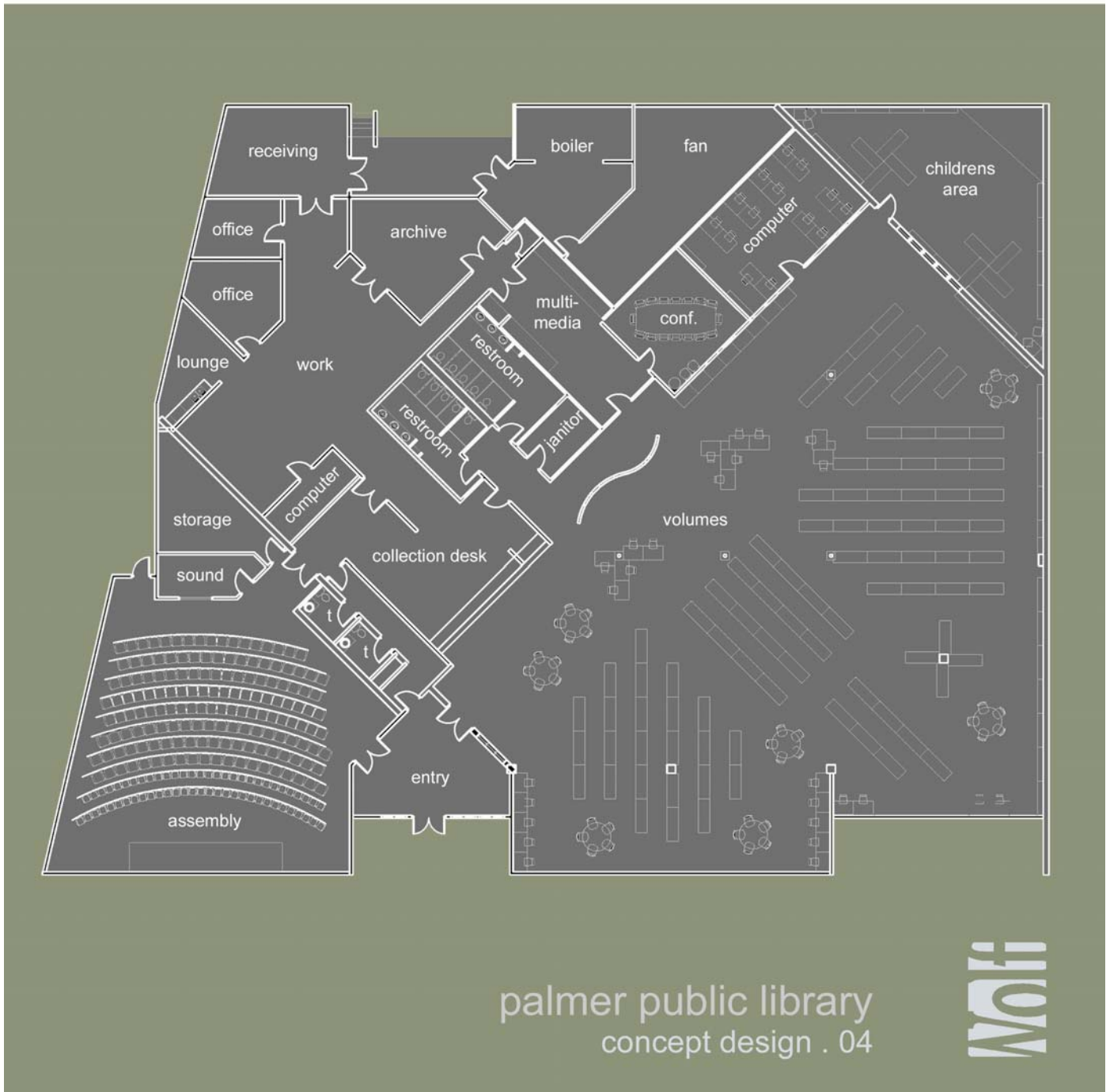
Wolf Architecture prepared a preliminary cost estimate for the addition and remodel option shown in the appendix. Total project construction costs for the illustrated option should range from a low estimate of \$2,999,000 through a median estimate of between \$3,497,000 and \$3,840,000 to a high estimate of \$4,499,000. This estimate is based on current construction costs for public projects in Palmer. These costs are not exact and are intended as a preliminary guide to possible project costs. Actual project costs may vary depending on many factors. A tabular breakdown of the total project cost estimate is included in the appendix.

Conclusions

The City of Palmer Library is currently undersized to meet the information requirements of the current or projected service area population. The projected area increase will approximately double the size of the existing facility. This substantial addition will more than likely require a re-configuration of the existing facility programmatically and physically. The addition will require the parking space allocations for the existing parking area be increased by approximately 45 parking spaces.

Appendix

Concept Floor Plan



December 28, 2004

Concept Exterior Perspective



Project Cost Estimate (tabular breakdown)

Palmer Library Addition/Remodel

Cost Estimate

Basic bid	Description	Percent	Estimate
Div 01	General Requirements	17.0%	\$652,800
Div 02	Sitework	4.0%	\$153,600
Div 03	Concrete	2.0%	\$76,800
Div 04	Masonry	4.9%	\$188,160
Div 05	Metals	6.0%	\$230,400
Div 06	Wood and Plastic	11.0%	\$422,400
Div 07	Thermal and Moisture Protection	6.0%	\$230,400
Div 08	Doors and Windows	6.5%	\$249,600
Div 09	Finishes	12.0%	\$460,800
Div 10	Specialties	2.0%	\$76,800
Div 11	Equipment (included separately below)	0.0%	\$0
Div 12	Furnishings (included separately below)	0.0%	\$0
Div 13	Special Construction (not applicable)	0.0%	\$0
Div 14	Conveying (not applicable)	0.0%	\$0
Div 15	Mechanical	15.6%	\$600,000
Div 16	Electrical	13.0%	\$500,000
Total Estimated Construction costs		100.0%	\$3,841,760
Architectural/Engineering Design		10.0%	\$384,176
Construction Administration and Contingency		10.0%	\$384,176
Utility Upgrades		3.0%	\$115,253
Project Management Costs, City of Palmer		7.0%	\$268,923
Estimate of Furnishings, Fixtures, and Equipment		5.0%	\$192,088
Total Estimated Other Project Costs		35.0%	\$1,344,616
Total Estimated Project Costs			\$5,186,376

WI Worksheets

