



STAFF REPORT

REPORT OF THE CAO FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF COUNCIL RE. A PUBLIC TOWN HALL FOR INPUT INTO THE RECREATION AND WELLNESS HUB

OBJECTIVE

To provide Council with information re. seeking public input for planning next steps re the proposed Recreation and Wellness Hub

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report of the CAO dated June 22, 2021 be received;

AND THAT Council approve the format and process related to seeking public input into the next steps for the proposed Recreation and Wellness Hub including but not limited to a public Town Hall

AND THAT staff be authorized to research and present information re. pre-fabricated structures as well as existing plans for traditional construction at the Town Hall.

Daniel Gagnon
Chief Administrative Officer

BACKGROUND

The city has been struggling with options to improve/replace the aging recreation facilities that are well past typical life expectancy and costly to maintain and operate. In 2017, Colliers Project Leaders was contracted to review the feasibility of a Recreation and Wellness Hub that would encompass a pool, arena, walking track, small gym spaces, large gym space and a 5-sheet curling pad. That exercise included public consultations.

Since 2018, administration has been working with stakeholder groups and having public committee meetings with presentations by the consulting engineers/architects where needed. The last such meeting was held at the Collins Hall in September 2020 as a special meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee.

The city was notified in summer of 2020 that the funding application for a \$40M facility was declined by the province. More recently, Council moved to remove the large gym space and the curling sheets from the hub concept. The current capital cost estimate for a pool, arena and walking track/modest community rooms is \$27M plus \$1.9M (7 % of capital costs) for detailed design and construction ready documents (ie. shovel ready state).

In May 2019, Council and the Ad Hoc Community Hub Committee were presented with information regarding pre-fabricated options for the Rec Hub. This included information from Colliers discussing the pros and cons of pre-engineered buildings (see attached). The only con listed was the lack of flexibility in design. The pros included the lower cost, less requirement for quality control and shorter construction times. They summarized by saying that a pre-engineered building would be ideal for the multi use complex with a more conventional build being used for the lobby area. Also attached is an excerpt from IDEA architects' presentation circa Sept 2020 re. building types.

Recently, staff reached out to some vendors to get current information and pricing on pre-fab structures. This was undertaken after Council's direction to change the scope of the hub to include a pool, arena and walking track. In light of there being no imminent funding opportunities, this was pursued to search out a more affordable building option.

ANALYSIS

In discussions with one vendor (Sprung Structures) an estimated cost of \$225 - \$250 per square foot was provided as a rough guideline for a complete build of a pool/arena. On an estimated 72,000 sq ft facility, that would equate to a \$16.2 - \$18 Million construction cost. A further advantage of using a pre-engineered structure is the elimination of a large portion of the soft costs, including engineering, that are part of traditional build (\$1.9 million was the estimate on the \$27 million rec hub).



Speed is also a factor in a pre-engineered build. It would take an estimated 9 months to get a structure erected once the site has been prepped. With this type of construction, the option also exists to erect the main structure and then construct the interior amenities at a separate time. This allows for winter construction of the interior inside a covered shell.

Given that not much attention has been provided to pre-fab concepts in recent past, administration thought it best to re-introduce the concept now with Council (ie. before the public consultation process outlined below begins in earnest).

Public Consultation / Town Hall:

Council will need to make important decisions in the coming weeks and months. It is hoped that the 2022 budget exercise will begin in September 2021. As the current recreation facilities will require significant investment annually, direction is needed soon on how to move forward. Staff will also need to be directed on what new build options to pursue.

In order to facilitate and inform future decision making, some form of public consultation was deemed important by Council and staff were directed accordingly at the last meeting. While many details have yet to be determined, staff will pursue the following concepts for a robust and well advertised Town Hall / consultation process:

- Summarized information about the hub and main issues in a briefing note style for the public to review before submitting feedback
- Hardcopy mail to all residents to inform them of the public consultation process, including options to drop off feedback in the City Hall and library drop boxes
- Zoom style online virtual Town Hall featuring:
 - some form of Qs and As
 - less formal and staff led (ie. not a formal Council, nor committee meeting)
 - streamed, recorded and possibly broadcast on Eastlink
- Feedback can be taken in the form of hardcopy forms, phone calls to administration, email or via online form on the municipal website.
- Depending on the pandemic restrictions in place at the time, an open house or limited in-person format can be implemented when the picture clarifies.

Council can observe in real time the Town Hall or watch the video. All feedback will be collated and summarized for future deliberations at a formal Council meeting. It is anticipated that the Town Hall would occur in late July or early August.



It is anticipated that these consultation processes will help Council make informed decisions or at least ensure the public has had ample opportunity to absorb the information and participate in an important community issue. All the above processes however are unscientific. A referendum is more scientific, but a complex endeavour. This can be investigated but would be best done with a question added to the ballot at the October 2022 municipal election.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no significant financial impact to staff researching pre-fab structures nor having a Town Hall (modest printing and advertising costs for briefing material less than \$2,000)

LINKS TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Researching building options and hosting public consultations on the future of the recreation hub supports the following strategic goals:

- Educate public on infrastructure repair and replacement.
- Develop strategic internal and external communications.
- Ensure an appropriate level of reserves.
- Provide activities and promote healthy lifestyles through recreation for all age groups.
- Replace our aged recreation facilities

SUMMARY

Staff is recommending that Council approve the scope and format of public consultations around the recreation hub including some research on alternate building methods.

