

# City Centre Recreation Facility - Update

## ISSUE

This report is to provide an overview of recent discussions with the Saskatoon Public School Division regarding the possibility of a future partnership with the City of Saskatoon (City) to develop an integrated school and recreation centre within the core neighbourhoods of Saskatoon. This recreation centre is tied to the vision for a renewal of the aging and space limited White Buffalo Youth Lodge (WBYL).

## BACKGROUND

In early 2013, City Council identified a four-year priority to build a recreation centre located within the core neighbourhoods. In response, Administration began investigating potential options for a new facility within the city centre area that included a vision for a renewed WBYL. The current WBYL Partnership is connected through a formal partnership agreement which involves four partners: City of Saskatoon, Saskatoon Tribal Council, Central Urban Metis Federation Inc., and the Saskatchewan Health Authority.

In late 2013, the YMCA approached the City to begin preliminary discussions related to the potential for partnership opportunities between the City and the YMCA to develop a new city centre recreation facility.

At its May 20, 2014 meeting, City Council authorized the Administration to undertake discussions with the YMCA related to a potential partnership on a CCRF and that discussions also consider other project partners. City Council also requested that further information and data be gathered to develop a more formalized business plan for such a facility. Through 2014, the partnership expanded to include WBYL Partnership and the Saskatoon Public School Division.

In 2015 the partners undertook a Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study (Feasibility Study) to verify the need for a new city centre recreation facility and outline a potential plan for next steps. This Feasibility Study was presented to Council in late 2015.

In May 2016, following extensive consultations and the Feasibility Study, the partners jointly released a public statement with an update confirming there was a community need for a city centre recreation facility. However, to benefit everyone in the community now and in the future, the partners determined the soundest financial investment for going forward was to pursue two opportunities moving forward.

One facility opportunity identified in 2016, would be a collaboration between the WBYL Partnership and a new potential partner, Saskatoon Public Schools. Ideally it could be located in proximity to White Buffalo Youth Lodge (WBYL) and Princess Alexandra

School. The facility would provide access to education, social, recreation and community programs for those living in the city centre.

The second opportunity would involve the YMCA of Saskatoon and the City exploring a full range of partnership models to meet various community needs in growing areas of Saskatoon. To do this, there is a commitment to continue to develop a long-term strategy which outlines the greatest benefit to the community. This approach would include creating a long-term strategy based on the needs assessment, the City's Recreation and Parks Master Plan, as well as the YMCA's Strategic Plan.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

Earlier this year, the Saskatoon Public School Division (SPSD) informed the City that a project to consolidate three aging core neighbourhood schools (Pleasant Hill, King George and Princess Alexandra) into one location in a newly built school on the current site of the Princess Alexandra school, was submitted to the Provincial Government, as part of the SPSP's requests for capital funding in the coming years.

With the SPSP's plan, the question was posed as to whether or not the City was still interested in being a partner and would the City consider the option of integrating a planned renewal of White Buffalo Youth Lodge as the city centre recreation facility, as part of the planned school project.

Subsequent to these early discussions, during the spring budget announcements from the Province, the Saskatoon Public School Division received confirmation that their project for a new school on the Princess Alexandra School site had been approved for funding, with Phase One to start this year.

SPSD had provided an indication the project would take approximately 5 years to completion, and would involve the following stages of work:

- 1 year of consultation, securing partners, further design and cost estimates;
- 2 years of formal design and development refinement and approvals – putting together tenders and construction documents, finalizing all project parameters, and awarding tender; and
- 2 years of construction.

### **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS**

This project will have significant community impact, from child learning experiences, to neighbourhood community association programs, Indigenous family, child and youth social, recreation and health programs, services for vulnerable populations in general, and on neighbourhood planning considering the re-use of decommissioned schools and school properties and specific to King George School, heritage preservation. All of these impacts will be explored fully with the community through a comprehensive community engagement strategy.

Through development of a joint use recreation facility, the Partner organizations can increase recreation, cultural, health and social programs and services for a wide segment of the population living in the core neighbourhoods. Through a coordinated approach, that could include other community organizations such as community associations, Partners would have an opportunity to consolidate critical community programs and services in a way that reduces duplication and builds on the strengths and attributes of multiple organizations.

The goal of a joint facility is to optimize capital resources, achieve operational efficiencies and improve the quality of and access to community recreational facilities. The goals of the Partners will be first, to fully understand the potential needs and gaps currently not being filled by existing recreation facilities in the city centre; and second, to understand the feasibility of a sustainable integrated facility.

Unless otherwise directed by City Council, Administration will continue working with the Saskatoon Public School Division and the White Buffalo Youth Lodge Partnership to advance the concept and will report back to City Council in due course.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are currently no financial implications of this report. As Administration, and WBYL Partnership continues to proceed with exploring the partnership with Saskatoon Public School Division on a project for the renewal of WBYL as the new city centre recreation facility, Administration would then report back on financial implications and potential funding sources including potential contributions from the partners in WBYL.

### **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no privacy, legal, social or environmental implications identified.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Pending receipt of this report, development of a communication plan would be prepared to ensure projected milestones are in alignment with a comprehensive community engagement strategy.

### **REPORT APPROVAL**

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