

# Joint Use Facility Site Study – East Side High School – Leisure Centre Update

## ISSUE

This report provides an update on recent discussions with the Saskatoon Public School Division (SPSD) and the Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division (GSCS), and seeks approval to continue discussions regarding potential collaboration with the City of Saskatoon (City) on the planning of a joint use high school and Leisure Centre facility in the Holmwood Suburban Centre. The development of a new Leisure Centre is tied to the Recreation and Parks Master Plan – Facilities Game Plan and supports the City of Saskatoon’s Strategic Goal of Quality of Life.

## RECOMMENDATION

That this report be forwarded to City Council recommending:

1. That the Administration be directed to continue discussions with the Saskatoon Public School Division and the Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division related to the planning of an integrated Leisure Centre with the two new high schools being planned for the Holmwood Suburban Centre; and
2. That the Administration be directed to report back on funding options for the project.

## BACKGROUND

In September 2017, Administration presented the Recreation and Parks Master Plan - Long-Range Capital Plan to a Special Governance and Priorities Committee meeting. The report provided an overview of the 2017 Recreation and Parks Facilities Game Plan (Game Plan), including information about the planning context and methodology used to establish an updated prioritized list of recreation and parks capital projects connected to implementation of the recommendations within the 2015 Recreation and Parks Master Plan. The Game Plan identified the need for a new district level Leisure Centre within the next 10 years. Although the scope of the future Leisure Centre has not been finalized, the Game Plan identified that amenities such as an indoor pool, arts and culture program spaces, fitness rooms, multipurpose gyms, indoor playground and potentially indoor ice should be considered. At the time of the report, the northeast quadrant of the city was identified as a probable location, based on projected growth.

The Game Plan also identified the continued value of partnerships that enable the City of Saskatoon (City) to achieve broader service levels while also meeting the intended service outcomes it has for investment in recreation and parks. Along with the information report, presented by Administration, the meeting included several presentations from community-based organizations. One organization was the Saskatoon YMCA (YMCA), who expressed interest in partnering with the City on future initiatives. The YMCA requested the opportunity to explore future partnership opportunities in the construction and operation of the next indoor Leisure Centre.

At its November 2017 meeting, City Council approved the Recreation and Parks Master Plan – Facilities Game Plan Capital Priorities - Proposed Plan for Funding Strategy Including Partnership Reserve report. The finalized Game Plan identified the top recreation and parks facility priorities for a long-range capital plan, including approximate costs. For the proposed 10-year capital priorities, the large-scale capital project list included a new district level Leisure Centre with an estimated capital cost of \$45 million. The new Leisure Centre did not have a formalized funding plan, and the report noted that more work would be required to determine potential funding sources. It was also noted the project funding could include contributions from other levels of government, partnership opportunities, and City funding.

In March 2018, City Council approved the Recreation and Parks Master Plan - Facilities Game Plan – Proposed Funding Plan. The report detailed the funding plan that would facilitate implementation of the Game Plan capital priorities over the next five years, including City and partnership-led recreation and parks priorities, and the establishment of the major and minor partnership reserve. The report continued to identify a summary list of unfunded capital priorities for 2024 and beyond, including the new Leisure Centre initially targeted for 2028, which requires additional work to develop a funding plan.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

In October 2019, the SPSD and the GSCS advised the City they were formalizing a 10 to 20-year plan for development of new schools. Two new high schools were identified as priorities for the east side of Saskatoon. During meetings with the two school divisions, the potential of including a new Leisure Centre, in a joint use high school facility was discussed. Based on current demographics, growth rate and current enrollment, the Holmwood Sector was determined to be the next location for new high schools. The Holmwood Suburban Centre is part of the larger development of the Holmwood Sector, as outlined in the City's Growth Plan and is currently being planned for 80,000 to 100,000 residents. The plan includes land allocation provisions for new high schools within its Suburban Centre and is complemented by multi-district and district park allocations.

In November 2019, as the two school divisions were preparing details for their capital project submissions to the Ministry of Education for approval and funding consideration, they approached the City about the potential for conducting a joint use facility site study, to determine if the site would accommodate an integrated Leisure Centre with the two new high schools, similar to the model at the Shaw Centre. The Administration worked with the two school divisions on a base level feasibility/site planning study, with the scope of work being as follows: to determine state of readiness; size of parcel; size of schools; programs; population projections; and the impact to existing high schools, boundaries, etc. This work was required in order for the Administration to understand whether or not a potential partnership at this location would meet the City's needs as outlined in the Game Plan.

The final report of the site planning study was used by the School Divisions as part of an application for capital funding to the Ministry of Education which was submitted in February 2020. Utilizing information from the Game Plan, Administration provided input

into the adjacent park space needs, potential amenities to be included in the multi-district park, and components and spaces of a potential new Leisure Centre, if this were to be part of a new joint use facility.

The School Divisions have identified the preferred opening date for the new schools as the start of the 2025/26 school year. This timeframe is based on an initial look at the projected school utilizations, where it was determined four out of the five existing high school's infrastructure was going to exceed 100% utilization by 2025. The school jurisdictions have indicated the enrolment in north east and east Saskatoon is anticipated to continue to grow at a rate that will outpace the existing infrastructure. The projected enrolment and utilization figures illustrate a need for new high schools, not only for the Holmwood Sector, but also to relieve the strain on the existing east side high schools. Additionally, 2025/26 is the earliest realistic opening year based on the timeline for a project of this scale to be designed and delivered properly, assuming approval in approximately the next year.

Although the capital project submitted to the Ministry of Education for two new high schools did not receive 2020 funding, the School Divisions did receive \$250,000 (\$125,000 per school division) in funding for a scoping study to further enhance the information and collect more data related to growth projections and modelling for all the high schools in Saskatoon. The School Divisions will be preparing a follow up submission to the Ministry in anticipation of receiving capital funding approval during 2021 capital budget process.

## **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS**

### **Joint Use High Schools and Leisure Centre**

A potential joint use high school and Leisure Centre facility in the Holmwood Suburban Centre would have significant positive community impact. Community facilities that incorporate education and recreation facilities together, create a “sense of community” through community programs, recreation and social programs. Facilities of this nature also attract residents to reside in the area. Should the project proceed, all of these impacts will be explored fully with the community through a comprehensive community engagement strategy.

Some of the benefits to the partner organizations of a joint use high school and Leisure Centre include:

- Optimize capital investment and leveraging of funds;
- Efficiencies from reduced redundancy of amenities and spaces;
- Elimination of circulation spaces, exterior walls, unnecessary washrooms, excess parking, duplication of uses;
- Enriched learning environment by providing access to leisure facilities within the same space;
- Efficient use of land, for example, parking requirements can overlap. Less parking space required leaving more space for outdoor recreation;
- Transit access is more efficient with fewer discreet stops; and

- Efficient use of outdoor spaces for sport fields and green space.

Through development of a joint use high school recreation facility, the partner organizations can increase recreation, cultural and social programs and services for a wide segment of the population living in the east Holmwood Sector and the north east areas of the city. Through a coordinated approach, which could include other community organizations, including community associations, there is the 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 and achieve greater value for the community. Like the Shaw Centre, the joint design will mean less space requirements for amenities like multipurpose rooms and shared gymnasium spaces. The goals of the Partners will be first to fully understand the potential needs and gaps currently not being filled by existing recreation facilities on the east side of the city; and second, to understand the feasibility of a sustainable integrated facility.

Both school divisions and the Administration are interested in building on the joint-use successes of the Shaw Centre in a new shared facility. Administration is therefore seeking approval from City Council, to continue working with the SPSD and the GSCS to advance the concept and then report back to City Council in due course.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Construction of a new leisure facility will have capital and operating budget implications. The Game Plan identified a possible capital cost of \$45 Million. An early report will be brought forward, within the next six months, outlining options and funding approaches that consider funding sources and potential contributions from other levels of government.

Accurate estimates will be available later in the project, once the scope of work has been developed through community engagement and based on the requirements outlined in the Game Plan. At the appropriate time, Administration will bring forward a report package with a series of options for amenities provided, and the associated estimated capital and operating impacts. At that time, Council will make the final decision on any funding commitment for the project. The Administration will continue to work with the respective school divisions to ensure go/no-go and scope of work decision points are coordinated between the school divisions and Council.

### **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

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

### **NEXT STEPS**

Pending City Council's direction, Administration would either discontinue planning for a Leisure Centre at this location or if approved, Administration would then continue to

collaborate with the two school boards on the potential joint use high school and Leisure Centre. If the School Divisions receive approval for capital funding in March 2021, then Administration would need to determine the scope of the Leisure Centre project, undertake community engagement, proceed with functional design planning and formalize a total estimated project cost for Council's further consideration within the first half of 2021. The Administration would also need to report to City Council on the future development and funding plan options.

**REPORT APPROVAL**

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