



Canada Centre Recreation Hub

Date	June 16, 2021
To	Executive Committee
From	City Planning & Community Development
Service Area	Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services
Item No.	EX21-44

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive Committee recommends that City Council:

- 1) Approve up to a \$2,000,000 capital contribution from the Recreation & Culture Capital Plan for Regina Exhibition Association Limited to develop the Canada Centre Building as outlined in this report.
- 2) Authorize the Regina Exhibition Association Limited to pursue a Material Alteration to the Canada Centre Building on the REAL Campus site for development of a multi-use recreation and sport-court facility; and delegate authority to the City Manager to sign any required planning permits on behalf of the City of Regina, as the land owner, to initiate any required planning applications related to the proposed development.
- 3) Delegate authority to the Executive Director, City Planning & Community Development, or designate, to negotiate and approve an Agreement(s) between the City of Regina and Regina Exhibition Association Limited. regarding the contribution of capital funds as outlined in this report. Including authority to make amendments to the Agreement that do not substantially change what is described in this report and any ancillary agreements or documents required to give effect to the Agreement.
- 4) Approve these recommendations at its meeting on June 23, 2021.

ISSUE

Administration was approached by two organizations seeking partnerships with the City of Regina (City) to deliver pickleball and skate park facilities to the community. After exploring various options,

Administration is recommending that the City provide a capital contribution

to the Regina Exhibition Association Limited (REAL) to develop its Canada Centre Building to meet these needs, along with other recreation spaces that are in high demand.

IMPACTS

Financial Impacts

Required renovations to the Canada Centre Building are estimated at approx. \$2.8 million to complete the concept plan (Appendix A). Administration is recommending that the City provide up to \$2 million to REAL for the following:

- \$150,000 to cover costs associated with the lease of the proposed skate park for the next two years, enabling REAL to lease the space to the Regina Skateboard Coalition at no cost to that organization.
- \$1.85 million as the City's contribution toward renovation of the common spaces, such as washrooms, lobby space, curtains to divide the spaces and multi-court flooring.

Administration is recommending that the \$2 million in funding be cash flowed until the following funds can be accessed from the . Recreation & Culture Capital Plan::

- \$500,000 in partnerships funding in 2022
- \$1.5 million earmarked for a playground and spray pad hub in 2024

Administration is in the process of building a playground and spraypad hub at the former Regent Par 3 (opens late 2021) and outside the fence at the redeveloped Wascana Pool (2023). Administration is also in discussions with a corporate partner that is prepared to fund a large accessible playground in 2023 or 2024. Therefore, Administration believes it is reasonable to use the funding currently set aside for a playground and spraypad hub identified in the Recreation & Culture Capital Plan to move the proposed multi-sport recreational facility proposed by REAL forward. REAL would then be responsible to seek partners or other sources of funding for the other \$800,000 required to implement the plan as attached in Appendix A.

Rebalancing of the cashflow of the Recreation & Culture Capital Plan will be revisited and shared with Council as part of the 2022 budget process. Since the rebalancing does not occur until 2024, either projects in the plan will have to be delayed or earlier funding will be required from the Asset Revitalization Reserve, debt, or other funding source.

Legal Impacts

The lease agreement between the City and REAL in relation to the REAL Campus will apply to any on site construction and operations. All leases for specific space within the Canada Centre Building will be between the user groups and REAL.

A contribution agreement will be negotiated by the Administration and entered into between REAL and the City with respect to the \$2 million funding arrangement described in this report.

Any additional costs beyond the \$2 million in funding provided by the City required to complete the renovation will be the responsibility of REAL to fund through other sources.

Policy Impacts

Official Community Plan:

This project supports Goal 2 of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Section of *Design Regina: The Official Community Plan Bylaw 2013-48*. This goal refers to ensuring access to a variety of recreation programs and services in all neighbourhoods and encourages the use of facility partnerships to enable service delivery.

Recreation Master Plan (RMP):

Partnerships in the delivery of recreation services enable public funds to be leveraged into expanded service levels. It is also recognized through the RMP that having a relevant and optimized system of animated recreation facilities and spaces is not achievable through the City's efforts alone. Partnerships with service providers, users and others are integral in making the most of public investment in recreation. Working with like-minded recreation stakeholders is the way forward for the City.

OTHER OPTIONS

Option 1

Only invest in a portion of the Canada Centre Recreation Hub project and ask that Administration bring back a report regarding costs and timing associated with a specific portion of the project.

Option 2

Not invest in any of the recreation projects proposed as part of the Canada Centre Recreation Hub.

COMMUNICATIONS

If the recreation space, as presented in this report, moves forward, the City will work in partnership with REAL and the groups to promote the space to residents and stakeholder groups.

DISCUSSION

Over the past several months, Administration has been approached by two local organizations

interested in expanding the range of sport and recreation facilities in Regina:

- A private investor is interested in establishing an indoor pickleball facility to meet the needs of this growing sport.
- The Regina Skate Coalition (RSC) is interested in partnering with the City to provide an indoor skate park in the inner city.

Both organizations were encouraged to fill out the Partnership Proposal Form, which begins the partnership framework process. While working through the process and considering various options to meet these needs, Administration approached REAL to explore the potential to use underutilized civic buildings at the REAL Campus. REAL advised Administration that the opportunities were well aligned with a vision that was already under development to turn the Canada Centre Building into a multi-purpose recreation centre that could continue to be vacated for existing large events, such as the Farm Progress Show and the Canadian Western Agribition. These ideas were incorporated into REAL's concept plan, included in Appendix A.

Administration is proposing that the City provide \$2 million in funding to REAL through a contribution agreement to assist with the development of the concept plan. The recreation groups will work with REAL to formalize access to the facilities through lease agreements. The following provides background information on each of these recreation opportunities.

Indoor Pickleball

Pickleball is a sport rapidly growing across Canada. Municipalities across Canada are trying to determine how and to what extent the municipality should be involved in delivering indoor facilities. In Regina, the priority has been the establishment of outdoor pickleball courts. This approach is consistent with other municipalities in Western Canada. Administration reached out to several municipalities to learn more about their approach. Seventeen responded to the inquiry. None provided municipal dedicated indoor pickleball facilities. Instead, nine of the 17 indicated that they offer indoor pickleball through shared spaces such as gymnasiums. Six others stated that they had indoor pickleball facilities owned and operated privately or by non-profit organizations.

In late 2020, the City was approached by a private investor with plans to build an indoor pickleball facility. The land the investor was considering for the location was determined to be not appropriate for development for several reasons, including lack of services and sequencing concerns related to the growth plan. The investor then requested that the City consider a partnership to open an indoor facility on City land.

Due to the increasing demand for an indoor facility, Administration began exploring options for a location for a stand-alone facility. These options were reviewed with the private investor, who requested a commitment from the City, including a gift of land, valued at approximately \$1.5 million,

and ongoing tax exemption, estimated at approximately \$48,000 and approximately \$60,000 to cover permit fees. Administration also initiated discussions with REAL to determine whether there was an opportunity for this amenity in an underutilized facility at the REAL Campus. REAL advised Administration that the opportunity fit well within their existing plans for the Canada Centre Building; as such, discussions proceeded between investor and REAL.

At this time, REAL and the private investor have agreed upon the improvements and use of the west side of the Canada Centre Building for 12 dedicated pickleball courts. This portion of the project will move forward regardless of whether the City invests in the remaining spaces. A lease agreement is in place, and the investor will be making a capital investment in upgrading the flooring to improve the space for pickleball use. This space will be available to the public and will be operated by the private investor.

This approach is preferable to a stand-alone facility for several reasons:

- It maximizes the use of publicly owned infrastructure and is, therefore, a cost-effective means to addressing the needs.
- The agreement is based on market rates; as such, the operation is not subsidized in a manner that disadvantages other private sector providers.
- It can meet the needs of this growing community promptly in time for play in fall 2021.
- Pickleball is a use that was already temporarily being accommodated at Canada Centre Building.
- The use complements the sport and recreation hub that is proposed at the REAL Campus.

Indoor Skate Park

As with pickleball, the City's primary focus has been on establishing outdoor skate parks, which is consistent in other cities within Western Canada. However, until 2013, the City leased space at the REAL Campus to a local skate group in an effort to provide a facility for inner-city youth.

In 2021, Administration was approached by the RSC to determine if the City would support an indoor skate park through partnership. This proposed facility is intended to primarily serve children and youth, with a location in the city's central area to provide accessibility to those experiencing socio-economic barriers to participation. RSC's request is for space to be provided by the City and RSC would operate the facility independently.

RSC has received letters of support from Cowessess First Nation, Cote First Nation, Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations and the YWCA for the reinstatement of an indoor skate park on the REAL Campus are attached (Appendix B)

The development of an indoor skate park is consistent with the RMP, which recognizes the role facilities of this nature can play in providing a recreation space for Regina's youth in neighbourhoods experiencing socio-economic barriers. It should be noted that there is one privately owned indoor

skate park in north Regina. However, Administration's understanding is that this private business was in operation when the former indoor skate park existed at the REAL Campus before 2013. In addition, as mentioned, the focus for the skatepark being proposed at the REAL Campus will be serving inner-city youth and those with socio-economic barriers to participating in skateboarding.

The proposed indoor skate park is not only a safe space with positive role models, but it is also a place where youth can feel they are surrounded by people who share common interests. The RSC has also expressed interest in providing programming for youth. The RSC is currently working with the West Zone Board to offer skateboarding lessons at the Terry Hincks Skate Park for children and youth from ages three to 18, May through August.

In considering the proposal, Administration explored options in existing City-owned spaces and privately owned facilities and approached REAL to determine whether there was an opportunity to consider this amenity, which requires 15,000 square feet, in the Canada Centre Building concept plan. Through meetings with REAL and RSC leadership, it was determined that this is a viable option. REAL intends to enter into a lease agreement with RSC to operate the skate park to ensure the mentor role remains present in the space. In addition, the RSC has indicated it will fund the construction of all ramps for the skate park.

This approach is also preferable to a stand-alone facility for several reasons:

- As with pickleball, it maximizes the use of publicly owned infrastructure and is, therefore, a cost-effective means to addressing the needs.
- The site is an active site with high levels of participation adjacent to the space, which is a desirable feature for Regina Skate Coalition.
- Without new construction, the facility can be in place for fall 2021, allowing an opportunity to assess the operating model and location for the next two years, prior to making a permanent decision.

The use complements the sport and recreation hub that is proposed at the REAL campus.

Multi-sport Courts

The Canada Centre Building is a large facility currently used as agriculture and event space approximately six times per year. Even with REAL's existing leases for volleyball and pickleball and a potential lease for a skate park, the remaining space is large enough to house up to four multi-sport courts using sport court flooring that can be removed when needed.

Although the RMP does not prioritize investment in additional gymnasium space, REAL and Administration have heard from organizations since the development of the RMP that some are struggling to access sufficient gymnasium space within the city.

By investing in multi-sport courts, the publicly funded Canada Centre Building will be in use year-

round (aside from times when events take place). These spaces will also assist in creating additional vibrancy on the REAL Campus and will ensure recreation space is available for sports such as basketball, badminton and tennis as we continue to navigate what recovery from the pandemic looks like in Regina. In addition, because the sports court flooring is removable, this space could accommodate expansion of the pickleball area for future tournaments, if necessary.

The Concept Plan

As noted, the Canada Centre Building, aside from two volleyball courts at the front of the building and approximately six events, is vacant for most of the year. The above-noted prospects provide the opportunity for this publicly funded building to be a hub of activity year-round.

As the facility has been largely vacant and is used to house animals for agriculture events, there has been very little investment made in capital improvements over the years. REAL is estimating that the investments required to implement the recreation hub are \$2.8 million.

Based on the information provided, Administration recommends moving forward with investment in the Canada Centre Building as a recreation hub. It will provide a safe centrally located space for youth in Regina to participate in recreation in a positive and supportive environment. Staff working in the skate park will play a positive mentorship role and the RSC will have a space to provide programs to youth that may otherwise not have this opportunity. We have also heard since the development of the Recreation Master Plan that additional gymnasium space would be beneficial in assisting organizations in delivering recreation programs and with residents staying active. There have been a number of sport focused private developments that have opened recently. Unlike these private facilities this facility would provide court space for multiple sports that would be available to the public and sport organizations, who may be experiencing challenges accessing gymnasium space.

DECISION HISTORY

The ten-year Recreation & Culture Capital Plan was shared with Council as part of the 2021 General Utility Operating Budget and 2021-2025 General Utility Capital Plan (CM21-3).

Respectfully Submitted,

Respectfully Submitted,



Laurie Shalley, Director, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services



6/8/2021

Diana Hawryluk, Executive Director, City Planning & Community Dev.

6/10/2021

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A - Concept Plan

Appendix B - Letters of Support