



COUNCIL REPORT

Committee of the Whole

Report No. PRC 020-2020

Date: October 15, 2020

File No: 0620-20

To: Mayor and Council
From: Carmen Gonzalez, Director, Recreation and Culture
Subject: Arena Services and Infrastructure Strategy

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report from the Director, Recreation and Culture, regarding the Arena Services and Infrastructure Strategy Terms of Reference, be received for information.

REPORT CONCURRENCE	
General Manager The General Manager concurs with the recommendation of this report.	City Manager The City Manager concurs with the recommendation of this report.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

The 2018 Parks, Recreation and Culture ("PRC") Master Plan identified the need to develop an Arena Services and Infrastructure Strategy (the "Arena Strategy") to study the current and future needs for arena services for ice and dry floor sports, including required investments in existing and potentially new infrastructure. Staff have recently hired a consultant and are now initiating the development of this Strategy.

BACKGROUND

Arena Services is one of five service areas with Recreation Services and includes ice arena space for programs such as skating, ice hockey and curling, and indoor floor sports, such as lacrosse and ball hockey, and other non-sport programming during off-season months.

Currently, the City delivers ice arena services by two distinct delivery systems. First, by direct delivery through the Abbotsford and Matsqui Recreation Centres ("ARC" and "MRC") and MSA Arena and, second, through service agreements with Spectra Venue Management at Abbotsford Centre (city-owned), the Abbotsford Curling Club at the Abbotsford Curling Centre (city-owned) and The Rinks at Summit Centre (privately owned). The use of current arena services focuses on youth ice and dry floor sports, public learn-to-skate and drop-in programs, school programs and private rentals. ARC also includes a leisure ice surface open to the public through the Fall and Winter seasons. The City purchases ice time to supplement its arena

services from Summit Centre, who also provide a private venue for community programs, elite youth user groups and recreational adult hockey leagues in times not purchased by the City. Abbotsford Centre further supplements community ice needs primarily during the busy winter season, although this time is not consistent from week-to-week and season-to-season and the facility does not operate like a traditional community rink. The private Abbotsford Ice Rink also provides rentals and programming for ice sports to the community.

The City does not have an existing plan or strategy to guide the delivery of arena service or investments in existing or future infrastructure. Much of the City's current arena infrastructure is aging – MSA Arena was built in 1969, MRC Arena in 1971, Curling Centre in 1976 and ARC in 1994. Abbotsford Centre is the city's newest arena built in 2009. It is crucial to have a thoughtful Strategy to guide impactful and important decisions that reflect research, trends and community needs. Staff have now initiated this process and have engaged a consulting firm, Cornerstone Planning Group, to assist in the development of an Arena Services and Infrastructure Strategy for the City of Abbotsford.

DISCUSSION

The 2018 PRC Master Plan identified the need to complete a more robust study of current and future needs and to develop a Strategy for how to address the short, medium and long-term needs of the community and address life-cycle options for replacing and/or renovating existing arena facilities and potentially investing in new facilities. The development an Arena Strategy will assist in advancing many of the goals set out in the 2018 PRC Master Plan and is foundational to the delivery of a key recreation service.

The Arena Strategy will provide:

- Appraisal of current arena inventory and issues and recommendations to maximize current and future capacity, including any under-utilized services that could be maximized under a different service or business model;
- Analysis of objectives, challenges and requirements of various stakeholders, including arena sport user groups, and the community-at-large, through a robust public input and engagement process;
- Analysis of current and future trends in arena sports and facilities including changing needs relevant to shifting demographics, societal trends, industry trends, technology and environmental impacts;
- Service level recommendations, including quantity, location and configuration of facilities to meet demand in a regional context and in consideration of service levels in comparable municipalities; and
- Short, medium and long-term investment recommendations regarding the condition, renovation, replacement or development of arena facilities, including high-level capital cost estimates.

The development of the Strategy will focus on a number of aspects including user participation and demand trends, current service standards and how these compare to other similar communities, private-public-partnership opportunities and capacity, condition and allocation of existing facilities as it relates to optimizing spaces.

Council has allocated \$75,000 in the 2020-2024 Financial Plan to support this project. The Strategy development will follow the City's existing five stage process including: Background Research, Exploring Options, Draft Strategy, Final Strategy and Implementation and is anticipated to take 6-9 months to complete.

FINANCIAL PLAN IMPLICATION

Council approved \$75,000 in the 2020-2024 Financial Plan for this project.

Komal Basatia

Komal Basatia
Acting GM, Finance and Corporate Services
Signed 10/8/2020 3:15 PM

IMPACTS ON COUNCIL POLICIES, STRATEGIC PLAN AND/OR COUNCIL DIRECTION

The development of an Arena Services and Facility Strategy is a 2020 Council Strategic Plan Priority and 2018 PRC Master Plan short-term priority. It supports the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan Cornerstones of Vibrant Economy and Complete Community.

SUBSTANTIATION OF RECOMMENDATION

Arena Services are a foundational aspect of recreation service delivery in the City of Abbotsford. The City owns five major arena facilities and a strategy to guide the delivery of services and investments in current and new potential facilities will ensure programs and services meet community needs and investments in costly facilities are effective, appropriate and timely.

Carmen Gonzalez

Carmen Gonzalez
Director, Recreation and Culture
Signed 10/8/2020 1:55 PM

Mary Morrison-Clark

Mary Morrison-Clark
General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture
Signed 10/8/2020 2:34 PM