

Meeting Date: May 12, 2021
Department: Community Services
Report No.: CS-2021-06
Submitted by: Robert Lilbourne, Director of Community Services
Approved by: Fred Tranquilli, Chief Administrative Officer / Clerk
SUBJECT: **Recreation Facility Infrastructure Renewal Strategy**

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT: Council receive the Recreation Facility Infrastructure Renewal Strategy Report for information; and further,

THAT: Council appoint a RFIRS Committee comprised of five members of Council to provide direction on the renewal or replacement of the recreation facilities infrastructure within Strathroy-Caradoc contained in the Nustadia report; and further,

THAT: Council adopt a RFIR Plan no later than June 21, 2021 in order to begin preparing shovel ready plans which might qualify for funding partnerships with other levels of government.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This matter is in accord with the following strategic priorities:

- **Local Infrastructure** – Households and businesses in Strathroy-Caradoc are supported by reliable, financially responsible and well-maintained infrastructure networks.
- **Community Wellbeing** – Residents of all ages in Strathroy-Caradoc will have access to community amenities and activities that are accessible and support active lifestyles and wellbeing.
- **Growth Management** – Strathroy-Caradoc will be an inclusive community where growth is managed to accommodate a range of needs and optimize municipal resources

- **Destination Building** – *Strathroy-Caradoc will provide distinct experiences that celebrate its past and future by prioritizing innovative new ideas that set the community apart.*

INTRODUCTION

The Strathroy-Caradoc Municipal Council has not embarked on a forward looking, overall Recreational Facility Strategy since the amalgamation of the Town of Strathroy and Caradoc Township. Amalgamation resulted in the transfer of aging, outdated recreation infrastructure to the community of Strathroy-Caradoc. The current posture of the community's parks and recreational facilities still resembles that of two separate, independent communities. A community wide, broadly co-ordinated effort is required to better position Strathroy-Caradoc to respond to the needs of current and future residents of Strathroy, Mount Brydges, and Melbourne.

A series of community/stakeholder consultations have been undertaken and the assessments of existing facilities have been delivered and the time to look forward is here.

BACKGROUND:

The 2015 Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) recommended a Service Delivery Review and Engineering Assessments of Indoor Recreation Facilities. The review recommended that Strathroy-Caradoc prepare service delivery strategy reviews and engineering assessments of the indoor recreation facilities, initially focusing on the West Middlesex Memorial Centre and Tri-Township Arenas with specific emphasis on forthcoming lifecycle capital expenses (eg. roof and floor) as well as physical plant efficiency in order to evaluate future investment and positioning decisions.

Prompted by the 2015 PRMP, in 2018 the Municipality engaged the firm of WalterFedy to conduct detailed Building Condition Assessments (BCAs) of the Tri Township Arena, West Middlesex Memorial Centre, Gemini Sportsplex and the Caradoc Community Centre.

The assessments provided the Municipality with:

- A detailed inventory of the facilities and their components;
- Condition descriptions and ratings of facilities and their components;
- Insight into the Municipality's current and future capital budgets;
- The ability to forecast capital renewal costs over the next 25 years; and
- Overall current replacement value estimates of each asset.

The deteriorating condition of recreation facilities identified in the WalterFedy report prompted Council in 2019 to embark on a Recreation Facility Infrastructure Renewal Strategy (RFIRS). The RFIRS was to meet the objectives listed below.

- Identify a recreation facility renewal strategy through a systematic business planning approach;
- Analysis of all current and future recreational facility needs for the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc;
- An implementation plan to deliver the recreation facility infrastructure renewal program;
- Updated condition assessments for the Tri-Township Arena, Caradoc Community Centre, Gemini Sportsplex and West Middlesex Memorial Centre;

- Through community and stakeholder engagement, identify current and future needs in terms of recreation facility infrastructure;
- Project funding options; and,
- Site selection evaluation of available sites (if applicable).

The Municipality engaged Nustadia Recreation Inc. to perform the work (see attachment). The methodology applied in the RFIRS included;

- Review of current Building Condition Assessment reports with site visits to confirm the assessments and update if required;
- Stakeholder engagement, including the general public, user groups, and staff. An engagement process which involved several individual meetings and a broad public survey;
- Review of local and regional recreational services as well as local demographics and user group registrations from recent years;
- Identify potential building program elements and provide preliminary schematic sketches from the site visits and input from the engagement process;

COMMENTS:

The BCAs identified that the municipality’s assets were either approaching, at or beyond their life cycle, requiring significant financial investment or redevelopment. This was further confirmed through the RFIRS evaluation.

The RFIRS considered the Municipality's aging infrastructure which is comprised overwhelmingly of ice arenas. Changing demographics and user participation needs as well as limited tax dollars available to invest and deliver recreation facilities are also important considerations.

Nustadia Recreation Inc. has provided a five-year plan made up of four main recommendations. The Nustadia recommendations are consistent with the framework previously approved by Council in that they are directly supported by the data derived through the very broad community consultation, they provide the variety of activity options which reflect resident feedback and the proposed capital investments will result in multi-purpose facilities. If approved, the recommendations will allow citizens of all ages and genders to enjoy the broadest variety of recreational opportunities ever offered.

RECOMMENDATION #1:

- Decommission, or take out of service, the Tri-Township Arena no later than Spring 2022, preferably sooner.

RECOMMENDATION #2:

- Within the next five years (if not sooner) decommission, or take out of service, the West Middlesex Memorial Centre.

RECOMMENDATION #3:

- Develop a multi-use recreation facility for Mount Brydges consisting of the following building program:
 - a) Indoor playing field (air Inflated dome - half of full regulation size field).
 - A full sized, indoor field house within a pre-engineered structure may also be considered with necessary modifications to the site design.

- b) If financially viable, the option to retrofit the existing Caradoc Community Centre for ancillary space for the indoor playing field and multi-generational programming space to offer a mix of passive and active recreation programming opportunities.
- c) If not financially viable to retrofit, decommission the Caradoc Community Centre and build a new community centre with ancillary space for the indoor playing field (6,000 to 8,000 SF).
- d) A covered 10,000 SF pavilion with refrigerated ice-skating pad for ice related activities during colder months and outdoor active multi-use court space for warmer months.
- e) Park maintenance equipment building (2,500 SF).

RECOMMENDATION #4

- Within the next five years, expand the Gemini Sportsplex Multi-use Recreation Facility consisting of the following building program:
 - a) Consolidate community ice at Gemini to improve efficiencies and tournament opportunities (to become a three pad arena facility).
 - b) Twin gymnasium with an elevated indoor walking track (20,000 to 25,000 SF).
 - c) Additional multi-generational programming space (6,000 SF).
 - d) Required capital upgrades to existing twin pad facility.
 - e) Convert one of the natural grass playing fields to an outdoor, lighted artificial turf playing field.

The recommendations above take into consideration the following;

- a) 2015 Parks and Recreation Master Plan;
- b) 2019 Building Condition Assessments;
- c) 2020 Corporate Strategic Plan;
- d) Local Census Data (2016) and Industry Trends;
- e) Public Surveys and Stakeholder Consultation and;
- f) Impact of COVID 19 Pandemic

Diversification of recreation facilities away from mainly ice surfaces is the recurring theme consistently heard from citizens through the development of the above corporate planning documents. The recommendations in this report respond to that consistent community feedback by providing a variety of programmable spaces to accommodate diverse demographic needs and desires. These spaces will finally provide venues where dedicated senior's programs could be offered involving various levels of activity and engagement in response to the partnership between the Town and the Strathroy and Area Seniors Council. Multi-purpose facilities will be ideal for intergenerational programming which fosters activities which integrate seniors and youth

CONSULTATION:

Nustadia Recreation Inc.
Fred Tranquilli – CAO

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

**Summary - Financial Implications for Proposed Recommendations
(NB. This summary is based on a five to ten year horizon)**

Recommendation	Avg. Capital (Saving)/Cost	Avg. Operating (Saving)/Cost	Annual (Saving)/Cost	Cumulative (Saving)/Cost
#1 Decommission Tri-Township Arena by Spring of 2022 (our share @ 80%)	-\$608,000	-\$100,000	-\$708,000	-\$708,000
#2 Decommission West Middlesex Memorial Centre (within next 5 Years)	-\$840,000	-\$175,000	-\$1,015,000	-\$1,723,000
#3 Build Multi-Use Recreation Facility in Mount Brydges (savings from capital works not needed at Caradoc Community Centre)	\$13,500,000	\$75,000	\$13,575,000	\$11,852,000
	-\$170,000		-\$170,000	\$11,682,000
#4 Expansion of the Gemini Sport plex (savings from capital works not needed at the Gemini Sport plex)	\$26,625,000	\$125,000	\$26,750,000	\$38,432,000
	-\$300,000		-\$300,000	\$38,132,000
Totals	\$38,207,000	-\$75,000	\$38,132,000	

The overall cost of the plan if all recommendations were adopted would require a capital program over the next 10 years of \$38,207,000 and annual operational savings of \$75,000.

The funding options available to the Municipality should any or all of the recommendations move forward could include a combination of sponsorship, loans, grants, development charges and fundraising. The Municipality does not currently have any shovel ready recreation facility projects which might qualify for funding partnerships with other levels of government.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Nustadia DRAFT REPORT – Recreation Facility Infrastructure Renewal Plan