



Media Release

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: May 27, 2020

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City Council receives results of Active Living Centre Feasibility Study

Vernon City Council has received the results of the Active Living Centre Feasibility Study, which includes a recommended *preferred design option* for future indoor recreation facilities for the Greater Vernon area.

The study was established as a result of the 2018 Recreation Master Plan, in which Greater Vernon residents identified a need for new indoor recreation opportunities. It was conducted by FaulknerBrowns Architects and staff from Greater Vernon Recreation Services.

The goal of the study was to find an indoor facility mix that meets the current and future needs of a growing community, while also having the opportunity to attract new residents and visitors to the Greater Vernon area.

“We have done a significant amount of public engagement and consultation during this study,” said Doug Ross, Director, Recreation Services. “We have spoken with and received feedback from thousands of Greater Vernon residents through pop-up events, stakeholder sessions, an open house, an online survey, an elected official’s workshop, and most recently, a statistically-valid controlled mail survey.”

Based on the results of the study, the recommendation is to build a new facility on the former Kin Racetrack site that includes: a 50m pool, leisure pool, double gymnasium, fitness centre, walking/running track and multi-purpose spaces.

“The feedback we received from Greater Vernon residents during the study was consistent with the Master Plan,” said Ross. “Each of the recreation spaces identified in the recommendation received strong public support – particularly a 50m pool – with an understanding that the construction and operation of a new or expanded facility would require an increase in taxation.”

“A vital aspect of the study was to fully understand the balance between what the community desires and what the community can afford,” continued Ross. “Throughout the process, the consultants listened carefully to public feedback and made several adjustments to the facility size and design to include the amenities requested by Greater Vernon residents while containing costs. Based on figures provided by the consultant team’s Quantity Surveyor, an

Active Living Centre with all of the proposed amenities is estimated to cost approximately \$83 million if built at one time (under a Class D estimate*)."

Annual operating costs of a new fully developed facility are estimated to be approximately \$1.4 million. This includes the savings that would be realized through the decommissioning of the current Vernon Aquatic Centre once the new facility was open.

"If the full facility was built at one time, the tax implication for the debt servicing and operation of the facility for the average Greater Vernon household is estimated to be approximately \$167 annually," said Ross. "This amount could be reduced if we are able to secure grant funding or sponsorship dollars, but we don't know what opportunities may exist in those areas at this time."

As the public indicated that their preference was for Greater Vernon Recreation to only operate one aquatic facility, once a new 50m pool and leisure aquatics facility were being developed, another feasibility study would be required to determine how to repurpose the current Vernon Aquatic Centre.

The study provided several options for the development of the facility including building the facility all at one time or in phases. During its Regular Meeting of May 25, Vernon City Council supported in principle the conceptual plan for the Active Living Centre as presented, and the option to go to a referendum to borrow up to \$90 million to build the full facility at one time.

"Our recreation facilities proudly serve residents of the entire Greater Vernon region, so before further steps can be taken we need to present the results of this feasibility study to the elected officials of the District of Coldstream and Electoral Areas B and C," said Ross. "In order to go to referendum, we require unanimous support and direction from the elected officials of all the Greater Vernon Recreation Services funding partners."

He continued, "At this time, we are all navigating the difficult impacts of COVID-19, however, it's important to note that even if we receive direction to go to referendum, we would be another four or five years away from opening the doors to a new facility. This is a significant investment for our region and projects of this size take time and require careful consideration. We look forward to presenting the results of this study to our partners in the near future and to continue discussing how we might be able to take this project from the conceptual stage to a reality."

To review the feasibility study results and stay up-to-date on the Active Living Centre process, visit www.gvrec.ca.

**Cost estimates are Class D +/- 25%. Cost based on May 2020 dollars, escalation anticipated before construction bid.*

Below are conceptual designs for the proposed Active Living Centre facility.

