



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

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April 11, 2022

Vernon City Council on proposed Active Living Centre planning process

Vernon City Council would like to provide clarification on the planning process for the proposed Active Living Centre, and how members of the public and elected officials of the Greater Vernon area have participated. The Greater Vernon area includes the City of Vernon, District of Coldstream, and Electoral Areas B and C.

In 2018, Greater Vernon Recreation Services conducted an extensive engagement process with the public, stakeholders, and elected officials, in order to develop the Greater Vernon Recreation Master Plan. One of the many recommendations in that plan was to enhance the quantity and quality of the following types of recreation facilities for the Greater Vernon area:

- indoor aquatics
- community gymnasiums
- dedicated program spaces
- fitness and walking spaces
- outdoor pools

In early 2019, based on the Recreation Master Plan, City of Vernon's Council, District of Coldstream's Council, and Directors from Electoral Areas B and C, all supported a short-term action plan, which included 12 recommendations. One of those recommendations was to fund and conduct a feasibility study, to look at the development of new recreation facilities (including potential locations), and consider future enhancements to the current indoor aquatic facility.

The Greater Vernon Active Living Centre Feasibility Study was conducted between October 2019 and April 2020, and included another comprehensive engagement process with the public, stakeholders, and elected officials from Greater Vernon. Specific engagement activities included: an Elected Officials workshop; a direct mail random sample survey; an open house; three online surveys – one of which specifically sought input from youth; six focus groups; 10 pop-up events; and 21 stakeholder groups.

Based on the results of that engagement process, a preferred option was identified, to build a single multi-purpose recreation facility – the Active Living Centre. The facility is to include a new aquatic facility, double gymnasium, fitness centre, walking/running track, and dedicated program spaces.

The results of the Feasibility Study were presented to all Greater Vernon elected officials in June 2020. At that time, Vernon City Council endorsed the preferred option and recommended moving forward with a referendum to consider the development of the proposed Active Living Centre. Vernon also respectfully requested that the District of Coldstream and Areas B and C consider the project.

In response, the District of Coldstream notified Vernon it was not wishing to entertain participating in the Active Living facility project until the Culture Facility project was resolved.

In order to maintain project momentum, Vernon City Council decided it would continue with the planning process of the proposed Active Living Centre in preparation for a referendum, including carrying out geotechnical survey work at the Kin Race Track site and additional conceptual design work. Vernon Council advised the District of Coldstream and Electoral Areas B and C of this decision, and said it hoped they would reconsider participating at a future date.

On August 23, 2021, a presentation was made to the District of Coldstream's Council, with Area B and C Directors in attendance, to provide further information on the project and address some of the questions that were asked. The remaining questions were responded to in writing.

On December 16, 2021, the City of Vernon sent a letter to its Greater Vernon neighbours, making them aware of a planning timeline to lead up to a referendum in October 2022. Council again asked if they would like to participate in the proposed project and requested a response by April 25, 2022.

Since that time, an additional presentation has been made to Greater Vernon elected officials and additional questions that have been asked, have been answered in writing.

The City of Vernon has also recently provided presentations to other surrounding Regional District municipalities and electoral areas about the proposed project and have asked whether they would like to participate in the project.

Earlier today, at its Regular Meeting, Vernon City Council directed Administration to move forward with a City of Vernon referendum regarding the Active Living Centre, where the City of Vernon would be the owner, operator, and manager of the facility.

Vernon City Council has confidence in the outcomes of the Master Plan and Feasibility Study processes and believes the proposed facilities included in the Active Living Centre reflect the identified recreation needs of citizens of Vernon and the Greater Vernon communities.

The City of Vernon will continue to offer the opportunity for neighbour jurisdictions to join the project at a later date, either through the existing Recreation Agreement or through Fee for Service Agreements.

More information about the [Active Living Centre project](#) can be found at www.gvrec.ca.