

Presentation to Committee of the Whole
on
South End Community Centre

By
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October 5 2020

PROBLEMS WITH APPROVAL OF \$80 million SECC

- The priority needs to be fulfilled by a South End Community Centre have never been assessed within a Recreation Parks and Culture Master Plan for the City.
- The Official Plan requires all proposals for major new facilities to be reviewed within a Master Plan to establish current and future need and establish priority for construction to meet evolving need.
- The list of facilities proposed for the SECC is based on historical precedent set in the 1970's, not on documented community needs now and forecast needs in the next two decades.

WHAT ARE THE COMMUNITY RECREATIONAL NEEDS NOW AND IN THE NEXT TWO DECADES ?

- The most recent approved assessment of Community needs now, and forecast needs for the future, are in the Recreation Parks and Culture Strategic Plan approved by City Council in October 1997.
- The 1997 Strategic Plan forecast large changes in recreational activity in the community caused by demographic shifts in population away from the 0-24 age group.
- The result of the demographic shift was predicted to be declining interest in team sports and highly structured activities, and increased interest in more individualistic, self-scheduled and self-directed, outdoor oriented, environmentally friendly activities.

HAVE THE TRENDS PREDICTED IN 1997 OCCURRED?

- Between 2001 and 2016 the population of the City of Guelph grew by 12 % from 117,000 to 132,000.
- Between 2001 and 2016 the 0-24 age-group population grew 3 %.
- In 2001 youth 0-24 were 34% of the population, in 2016 31%.
- Population forecasts for 2031 show 0-24 age group as 29%.
- In terms of opportunity for individualistic self-scheduled activity there are now 17 gyms/fitness centres in Guelph, a large increase since 2001.

DID THE 2009 DRAFT MASTER PLAN ASSESS THE PRIORITY OF BUILDING THE SECC ?

- The 2009 Draft Master Plan is an internal document that was never received or approved at a City Council meeting. The Draft Master Plan was Received by the Emergency Services, Community Services and Operations Committee in July 2009 and sent back to staff for Comment. A revised and augmented draft was to be returned to ECO by December 2009 but this has not happened.
- The Draft Master Plan received by ECO did not evaluate the priority of building the SECC. Building the SECC at the location on Clair Road had already been approved by City Council in 2008. A Component Study added to the Draft Master Plan evaluated programmatic and facility elements for the SECC .

WHY WAS A NEW SOUTH END COMMUNITY CENTRE NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND FEASIBILITY STUDY CONDUCTED IN 2014 ?

- The approval of the SECC by City Council in 2008 was stale-dated by 2013. City Council recognized that the original approval decision should be reviewed and directed staff to prepare a new needs assessment and feasibility study for the SECC.
- This Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study was conducted on a stand alone single-project basis without any guidance from an assessment of long-term city-wide future needs provided by a comprehensive Recreation and Culture Master Plan.
- The 2014 Study based the need assessment on backcasting of historical practice in the provision of community centre facilities rather than forecasting of future needs based on changing demographics.

WHAT IS WRONG WITH A \$80 million SECC ?

- An \$80 million SECC is too expensive. Even with about \$ 20 million in Development Charges already collected when construction starts it will take more than 20 years to pay off the Development Charge portion of the debt using all of the Indoor Recreation DC collected for this one project.
- There is no assurance that spending \$80 million on this one project for Indoor Recreation is the best allocation of Indoor Recreation funds to achieve the desired outcomes of improved community and individual health, especially health of youth.

WHAT IS WRONG WITH A \$80 million SECC ?

- Allocating all the available funding for Indoor Recreation for the next twenty years on one multi-function complex near the southeastern boundary of the city at a location dependent on private-vehicle travel for access fails to respond to Official Plan Objectives of a City with walkable communities linked together by public transit and active transportation.
- The chosen site cannot support the intensity of use proposed if private-vehicle transport is used and there is no credible alternative transportation system available that could support the high-utilization attendance needed to justify the large capital cost.

DELAY APPROVAL OF THE SECC UNTIL THE NEW RECREATION PARKS AND CULTURE MASTER PLAN IS COMPLETED

- The role of the update of the Recreation Parks and Culture Master Plan is to provide guidance for effective expenditure of funds available for Indoor Recreation, using current knowledge of community needs as they have changed and will continue to change, for facilities that achieve the best outcomes possible for community and individual health.
- Committing all the available funds for the next twenty years on a single facility – the SECC - whose design is based on fifty-year-old concepts of community need in advance of completing an update of the Recreation Parks and Culture Master Plan would be a travesty of good planning.