



PARKS, FACILITIES AND RECREATION SERVICES

Staff Report

REPORT NO: PFRS 2021-018

TO: Council

SUBMITTED BY: Sandy Jackson, Director Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services

PREPARED BY: Sandy Jackson, Director Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services

REVIEWED BY: Patrick Kelly, Director Corporate Services/ Treasurer
Sharon Chambers, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: November 8, 2021

SUBJECT: Third Ice Pad Location Study – Preliminary Findings Summary Report

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Third Ice Pad Location Study – Preliminary Findings Summary Report be received;

AND FURTHER THAT staff be directed to initiate a public consultation process to seek comments on the recommended location of the Wilmot Recreation Complex for the third rink site;

AND FURTHER THAT staff be directed to present the public consultation results to Council with a recommendation regarding the preferred site.

SUMMARY:

This staff report and consultant presentation provide an update to Council regarding the consulting work provided by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd. related to the preferred site for a third rink in Wilmot Township. The report recommends the Wilmot Recreation Complex as the preferred site based on user group consultation, site tours and background work conducted by Monteith Brown. Next steps include a public consultation to seek comments regarding the proposed location, and development of a conceptual design with high-level budget estimates, which will be brought back to Council in future meetings.

BACKGROUND:

In October 2020, Council approved the Indoor Arena Usage and Needs Analysis Update which recommended a third ice pad be provided in Wilmot in the short-term to meet current and future needs from population growth. Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd. were retained to complete the study as a follow up to a report they provided in 2013 regarding future ice needs.

The report included the following:

- A summary of current ice facilities and level of prime-time ice bookings;
- A review of area municipal arenas within a 30 km/ 30-minute drive from Wilmot Township;
- A review of previous studies undertaken by the Township;
- Inclusion of related recommendations from the 2017 Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services Master Plan related to ice needs in the community;
- A review of stakeholder consultation undertaken as part of the 2020 ice needs analysis;
- A community profile outlining existing and forecasted population growth;
- A demographic review related to age structure within the community;
- An overview of socio-economic trends related to participation in sports;
- A review of pressures impacting key arena stakeholders regarding access to ice;
- A summary of a survey issued to all ice users currently utilizing the Wilmot Recreation Complex (WRC);
- A chart outlining the current registration levels for the major ice users;
- A comparison to national and provincial trends related to ice use;
- Reference to the current and potential future impacts of COVID-19; and
- An outline of the timing for future ice surface investment.

The following recommendations were included in this report:

1. Continue to target 1 ice pad per 450 registered youth participants (ages 5 to 19) in the planning for current and future ice surface needs, consistent with the Parks, Facilities & Recreation Services Master Plan and the previous Ice Needs Analysis. Based on this target and a continuation of existing participation rates, there is a deficit of ice at present (equivalent to 0.5 ice pads), growing to 1.1 ice pads by 2026 and 1.4 ice pads by 2031.
2. Provide one additional ice pad as early as the 2021/22 season. It is anticipated that the findings of this Analysis will be used by the Township to develop a strategy for the provision of future municipal ice surfaces. Specifics relating to the location, design, cost, funding, and form of management for a third ice pad are beyond the scope of this Analysis.

The Township should undertake further study to determine strategies for delivering a third ice surface, including considerations to partnerships, locations, operational models (multi-pad arenas are more sustainable than single pad facilities), and

funding (e.g., capital reserve). Potential strategies may include (but not necessarily limited to):

- rehabilitation of the New Hamburg Community Centre as a winter ice venue;
 - an expansion to the Wilmot Recreation Complex; or
 - new construction at an alternative site, with capacity for a fourth municipal ice pad (to be determined through future arena assessments).
3. Review potential implications of COVID-19 on arena participation and utilization rates as they pertain to short-term arena demand. The need for a fourth ice pad should be confirmed based on arena market factors including (but not limited to) the rate and timing of population growth (with emphasis on growth in the 5 to 19 age group), changes to participation rates, additions or removals of ice pads from the regional arena supply, changes to user group programming requirements and capabilities, etc.

As a result of these report recommendations, Council approved staff report PFRS 2021-013 and the following recommendations:

THAT the recommendations in the Indoor Arena Ice Usage and Needs Analysis Update prepared by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd. be received, and;

THAT staff proceed with Recommendation #2 *'to undertake further study to determine strategies for delivering a third ice surface'*, and;

THAT funding be included into the 2021 budget as per the existing 10-year Capital Forecast at an estimated cost of \$55,000; and,

THAT the existing contract with Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Inc. be extended to include strategies for delivering a Third Ice Surface report.

As a result, the 2021 Capital budget included funding for the follow-up study to determine strategies for delivering a third ice surface including location analysis, concept design(s) and estimated budget for construction planning. Three (3) options for location were identified for the new ice pad, including the WRC, recommissioning of the New Hamburg Community Centre (NHCC) arena, or selecting a new site if neither of the existing sites are deemed suitable.

In addition to the follow-up for the ice rink needs, the capital budget included a provision to complete a needs assessment and location study for a new Parks Operations site. This work was undertaken concurrently by Monteith Brown due to the synergies between the third rink and parks operations site, due to its current location at the WRC.

The report attached presents the preliminary findings of Monteith Brown's research and user group consultation.

REPORT:

The Third Ice Pad Study – Preliminary Findings Report is intended to provide guidance to the Township of Wilmot regarding prospective locations and preliminary design considerations for a new ice pad and parks operations centre. The report outlines the results from study undertaken by Monteith Brown, which included the following deliverables:

- Engage arena users and Township staff;
- Site tours of WRC and NHCC;
- Review background, trends & best practices for ice pads and parks operations centres;
- Develop site selection criteria for each project;
- Report preliminary findings to Council.

Consultation and Site Preference

Three (3) options were considered for the ice surface location including the WRC, NHCC and a new site should neither of the first two (2) options provide an opportunity.

The following groups were engaged and interviewed during the consultation process:

- New Hamburg Hockey Association (NHHA)
- Wilmot Girl's Hockey Association (WGHA)
- New Hamburg Skating Club (NHSC)
- New Hamburg Jr C Firebirds
- The Community Players (TCP)
- Wilmot Jr C Lacrosse

The Parks and Facilities Operations Centre was considered in tandem with the ice rink location due to the integrated nature of the current arena and operations centre. Although user group consultation was sought for the rink location, public / user group consultation was not part of the background work for the Parks and Facilities Operations Centre due to the operational nature.

The ice user group consultation and analysis completed by Monteith Brown identified the preferred location for the third rink as the Wilmot Recreation Complex (WRC) for the following reasons:

- Co-location with existing two active rinks – ideal for tournaments;
- Co-location with multi-purpose uses of aquatics, youth centre, fitness space, sports fields, splash pad and playground;
- Adjacent to Hwy 7/8 for local and regional markets;
- Ample land available for expansion;
- Existing building was constructed using modern barrier free accessibility and building code standards;

The NHCC site was not preferred as it displayed limitations due to small ice surface (less than NHL size), lack of parking, lack of expansion room for proper dressing room space due to flood plain and steep grade, poor accessibility standards due to age of structure.

Ice Rink Recommendation

The study completed by Monteith Brown includes the following preferred option:

"It is recommended that the Township of Wilmot construct its third ice pad by way of expanding the Wilmot Recreation Complex, designed and oriented in a manner that also allows for a potential fourth ice pad if required to meet post-2031 arena needs."

Parks and Facilities Operation Site Recommendation

The report indicates that should the third rink be located at the WRC, that a new site be sought for the Parks and Facilities Operation Centre. Both uses have compatibility challenges and co-locating an operations centre with the public facing recreation complex is not preferred.

Next Steps

With the preliminary work completed, providing Council supports this report, a two-week online consultation will be available for public input regarding the preferred location of the third rink which will include the following questions:

1. Do you currently reside in Wilmot Township?
2. Are you a current user of the Wilmot Recreation Complex?
3. If yes, what organization are you affiliated with (if any)?
4. Please provide your comments on the preferred location of the Wilmot Recreation Complex for a third ice pad.

It is anticipated that a follow up staff report will be presented to Council with input from the public based on the online survey questions in early December. In the interim, Monteith Brown will continue basic work on preparation of conceptual design(s) and high-level costing which will be presented back to arena stakeholders and Council in early 2022.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT STRATEGIC PLAN:

Completing the Third Ice Pad Study aligns with the Core Values of Health and Wellbeing, Community, Legacy, Accessibility, and Inclusivity and Forward-thinking.

This study supports the Goals of Quality of Life, Community Engagement and Responsible Governance.

ACTIONS TOWARDS UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Following the final presentation to Council, capital budget implications will need to be considered. Future reports will include additional information regarding order of magnitude costing for the third rink site and the parks operations site.

Both projects were included within the recently approved 2021 Development Charges Background Study, with a significant proportion of funding deemed growth related. Staff will need to develop a Business Plan, complete with financing strategies, to cover the non-DC eligible portion of capital and operating costs.

Monteith Brown estimates that the project will take a minimum of two (2) years to complete and typically rinks need to open in September to capture the full ice user market.

ATTACHMENTS:

Third Ice Pad Study – Preliminary Findings Summary Report

Township of Wilmot

Third Ice Pad Location Study Preliminary Findings Summary Report

November 8, 2021





Township of Wilmot

Third Ice Pad Location Study Preliminary Findings Summary Report

November 8, 2021

Prepared by:



**Wickens Greenspace
Consultants**



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The disclosure of any information contained in this Preliminary Findings Summary Report for the Third Ice Pad Location Study is the sole responsibility of the Township of Wilmot. The Study is attributable to work conducted to inform the Township of Wilmot's Terms of Reference for the Study and any findings contained herein should not constitute final recommendations since subsequent works will need to be undertaken by the Township. This Study has been prepared in consideration of information and documentation provided to Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd., and reflects the Consultant's judgment in light of the information available to us at the time of preparation of this report.

Any use which a third party makes of the Third Ice Pad Location Study, or any reliance on or decisions to be made based on it, are the responsibility of such third parties. Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd., Cornerstone Architecture and Wickens Greenspace Consultants accepts no responsibility for damages, if any, suffered by a third party as a result of decisions made or actions based on this report.

1.0 Study Purpose & Key Inputs

1.1 Study Purpose & Context

The Third Ice Pad Location Study (“the Study”) is intended to provide guidance to the Township of Wilmot as it evaluates prospective locations and preliminary design considerations for a new ice pad and operations centre.

In October 2020, an Indoor Arena Usage & Needs Analysis Update was presented to Township Council. The Analysis recommended that the Township provide a third ice pad to meet future needs arising from population growth as well as strong arena utilization and registration rates in Wilmot. Three options were identified for the new ice pad, consisting of the Wilmot Recreation Complex (WRC), recommissioning the New Hamburg Community Centre (NHCC) arena, or selecting a new site altogether if either of the existing facilities were deemed to not be feasible. Township Council directed Staff to initiate a follow up study focused upon site selection and cost implications to determine the optimal location for the third ice pad (while also considering longer-term expansion potential in the event a fourth ice pad would be required in the future).

At the same time, the Township was also planning to investigate whether the parks and facilities operations centre currently housed within the WRC remains the most appropriate location. The operations yard is situated behind the WRC and also occupies some space within the arena maintenance area. The Township wishes to evaluate the continued suitability of the WRC for the operations centre in light of future growth needs and an ability to deliver efficient services, or whether an alternative location should be considered. The intent of the two studies is to identify sites within a broad geographic area through which the Township can investigate specific parcels through subsequent and separate processes.

Due to the integrated nature of the current arena and Parks & Facilities Operations Centre, a decision was made to combine the arena and operations centre studies. Through the Third Ice Pad and Parks & Facilities Operations Centre Studies, the Township is seeking direction on whether a third ice pad is appropriate at the WRC and whether sufficient space would still exist to retain the parks and facilities operations centre, and/or whether alternative locations for both a new ice pad or operations centre should be contemplated (either co-located or provided on separate sites).

1.2 Study Methodology

Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd., Cornerstone Architecture, and Wickens Greenspace Consultants are assisting the Township with the Third Ice Pad Location Study. Notable elements of the project methodology involve:

- Engaging arena stakeholders and Township Staff throughout the planning process through interviews and workshops near the onset of the project, while a feedback opportunity will be afforded to stakeholders so that may review the Draft Study prior to its finalization;
- Reviewing relevant background information including building condition assessments, site and facility plans, staff reports, and trends pertinent to the design and construction;
- Development of site selection criteria to guide where the third ice pad would be optimally situated;
- Preparation of a conceptual plan and order-of-magnitude capital costs for the preferred option;
- Collaborating with Township Staff with respect to the development of operating costs; and
- Presentations to Township Council at key milestones throughout the process.

Study Exclusions

The scope of work for the Study excludes site engineering or building condition assessments, detailed construction drawings or technical specifications, comprehensive organizational reviews, negotiations with prospective partners, preparation of pricing structures, and quantification of specific community economic impacts. As a result, additional studies and investigations may be required to confirm assessments and findings contained herein.

1.3 Preliminary Findings Summary Report

This Preliminary Findings Summary Report summarizes information gleaned through research, consultations and an analysis of the WRC and NHCC as carried out to date. This Report recommends the preferred option(s) including ideal characteristics / features of a renovated, expanded, or new arena. The intent of the Preliminary Findings Report is to identify the most suitable location(s) for a third rink for the consideration of the Township Staff Team and Council.

Please note that a Preliminary Findings Report prepared in support of the Parks & Facilities Operations Centre Study is contained under separate cover.

1.4 Parks, Facilities & Recreation Services Master Plan

In January 2017, Township of Wilmot Council endorsed the Parks, Facilities & Recreation Services Master Plan prepared by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants. With the assistance of an extensive public consultation program and supported by a comprehensive assessment of indoor recreation facility needs, the Master Plan found that the Wilmot Recreation Complex arena was operating at capacity during many prime time periods and that selected arena users were travelling outside of the Township to access ice time available in other municipalities. The Master Plan found support for providing a total of three ice pads in Wilmot, confirming previous analyses prepared as part of the 2013 Indoor Ice Usage and Needs Analysis, along with the 2007 Addendum to the 2002 Recreation Facility Needs Study. Each of these studies identified options for a third ice pad, but did not evaluate or select a preferred provision option.

1.5 Indoor Arena Usage & Needs Analysis Update

In October 2020, Township Council endorsed the Indoor Arena Usage & Needs Analysis Update. That process involved consultation with major arena stakeholders along with a comprehensive assessment of arena needs over a 10-year planning period. The Update confirmed findings and directions contained in the Parks, Facilities & Recreation Services Master Plan as well as a previous Indoor Arena Usage & Needs Analysis prepared in 2013. The following recommendations were made:

1. Continue to target 1 ice pad per 450 registered youth participants (ages 5 to 19) in the planning for current and future ice surface needs, consistent with the Parks, Facilities & Recreation Master Plan and the previous Ice Needs Analysis. Based on this target and a continuation of existing participation rates, there is a deficit of ice at present (equivalent to 0.5 ice pads), growing to 1.1 ice pads by 2026 and 1.4 ice pads by 2031.
2. Provide one additional ice pad as early as the 2021/22 season. It is anticipated that the findings of this Analysis will be used by the Township to develop a strategy for the provision of future municipal ice surfaces. Specifics relating to the location, design, cost, funding, and form of management for a third ice pad are beyond the scope of this Analysis.

The Township should undertake further study to determine strategies for delivering a third ice surface, including considerations to partnerships, locations, operational models (multi-pad arenas are more sustainable than single pad facilities), and funding (e.g., capital reserve). Potential strategies may include (but not necessarily limited to):

- rehabilitation of the New Hamburg Community Centre as a winter ice venue;
 - an expansion to the Wilmot Recreation Complex; or
 - new construction at an alternative site, with capacity for a fourth municipal ice pad (to be determined through future arena assessments).
3. Review potential implications of COVID-19 on arena participation and utilization rates as they pertain to short-term arena demand. The need for a fourth ice pad should be confirmed based on arena market factors including (but not limited to) the rate and timing of population growth (with emphasis on growth in the 5 to 19 age group), changes to participation rates, additions or removals of ice pads from the regional arena supply, changes to user group programming requirements and capabilities, etc.

1.6 Arena Stakeholder Consultation

Stakeholders that were consulted during the 2020 Indoor Arena Usage & Needs Analysis were re-engaged to obtain feedback regarding arena location and design. Certain stakeholders not involved in the 2020 Needs Analysis were also contacted for this Study. One-on-one interviews were held via video conference in March 2021 with representatives from:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. New Hamburg Hockey Association | 4. New Hamburg Junior C Firebirds |
| 2. Wilmot Girl's Hockey Association | 5. The Community Players |
| 3. New Hamburg Skating Club | 6. Wilmot Junior C Lacrosse |

Notable and common points arising from these interviews are as follows:

- **WRC:** Ice sport organizations were supportive of the Council direction to proceed with the third ice pad, indicating it would allow them to grow their programs. The preference was to expand the WRC with one if not two ice pads, space permitting.
- **NHCC:** While recommissioning the NHCC arena was the secondary preference, ice sport organizations indicated that they would view it as a “practice rink” or dryland training facility due to its limited parking and dated changerooms, as well as a preference to use the WRC for games and more competitive-level programming.
- **Location & Site:** Arena users indicated that a future ice pad should be located along or near major roads/highways and central to the Township’s population, reinforcing the WRC as a preferred site. They indicated that the ability for the site to allow expansion for a fourth ice pad would also be ideal in the event that registrations continue to grow into the future. Certain groups noted that vehicular circulation is extremely important, using the example of the WRC where the parking lot and drop-off zone becomes very busy when multiple events are happening (e.g. Junior C games, swim programs, etc.).
- **Design:** All groups supported an NHL-regulation ice pad (200’ x 85’) with a minimum of 6 dressing rooms, referee room, and adequate storage. Bleacher seating would be suitable and organizations did not foresee a need for enhanced spectator seating capacity above what would be considered the average for a community recreational ice rink. A need for strong Wi-Fi connectivity and mobile phone reception throughout the building was also expressed.
- **Theatre:** The Community Players articulated their current constraints with operating out of the NHCC, largely associated with a lack of rehearsal space, storage, and workshop which creates functional challenges and can exhaust their volunteer resources. Their goal is to have a single space for all theater activities. TCP have invested in NHCC in the past and would be willing to stay at this location with some additional facility improvements, such as the insulation between floors.
- **Capital Contributions:** Arena organizations were willing to discuss if there is a role and capacity to assist the Township with potential contributions to capital funding for a new ice pad or enhanced amenities. However, organizations would have to consult with their executives, Boards and membership prior to making any commitments.

1.7 Arena Staff Workshop

The Township's arena staff were engaged to obtain feedback regarding the feasibility of adding an ice pad to existing arenas and design of a new ice pad. A group workshop was held via video conference on August 16, 2021 with seven staff in attendance consisting of Managers, Supervisors and Operators.

Notable points arising from the workshop are as follows:

- **WRC:** This arena has the potential for expansion and by incorporating the third ice pad it would be centralizing staff and programs to allow for maximum efficiency. The WRC offers ample parking though there are traffic congestion issues during peak times, primarily in the drop-off zone.
- **NHCC:** Some barriers to expansion on this site are being situated in the floodplain, limited onsite parking, and accessibility challenges for persons with disabilities. As a single pad it could have to shut down for an emergency mechanical repair if a replacement is not readily available unlike the WRC where some equipment can be "borrowed" between the two ice pads. However, the building has sentimental value to certain staff who would like to see this space retained for a new "warm" use if not recommissioned for ice purposes.
- **Site & Location:** A new arena should be in close proximity to facility users and staff, therefore, population distribution and a central location between New Hamburg and Baden is considered most advantageous. Situating the arena close to the highway or existing arenas would allow for easy access and efficiencies between locations.
- **Design:** Staff supported an NHL-regulation ice pad (200' x 85') with a minimum of 6 dressing rooms (ensuring availability for different genders or non-binary individuals), adequate storage for both operations and user groups, and a full bowl seating area. An area to send children waiting to get on the ice was suggested so that they do not damage flooring with their sticks or create conflicts with other facility patrons. Managing traffic flow and internal vehicular circulation will be important to factor into the site plan.
- **Sustainability:** staff indicated that Township Council have made a commitment to "go green" by the year 2035. This will have affect architectural building standards (e.g. LEED or Net Zero designations), size of the ice resurfacer room depending upon use of combustion versus electric engines, opportunities for heat recovery and exchange, building automation and use of technology in general.

2.0 Existing Arenas Analysis

2.1 Arena Supply

The Township operates two NHL-regulation sized ice pads at the Wilmot Recreation Complex (WRC) with six change rooms per pad and spectator seating for 350 and 750 spectators for each respective ice pad. The arena is part of a broader multi-use community centre that includes an indoor aquatics facility, fitness space, youth centre, program rooms, and a number of outdoor recreational amenities. The WRC is centrally located in the Township with direct access to Highway 7 and 8, drawing residents from across Wilmot as well as area municipalities.

The New Hamburg Community Centre (NHCC) is a former arena whose ice plant was mothballed after the opening of the WRC in 2007, a decision supported by the findings of the Township's 2002 Recreation Facility Needs Study. Originally constructed in 1948, the NHCC was most recently renovated in 2013 to improve the entrance, lobby and washrooms. The arena's dry floor is currently being used by the Wilmot Family Resource Centre for youth programs, The Community Players (TCP), special events, and a limited number of community rentals; it is not currently being used for ice sports or activities.



Wilmot Recreation Complex



New Hamburg Community Centre



2.2 Trends / Best Practices in Arena Design & Construction

Trends and best practices for arena design and Construction can be grouped under three major categories:

1. Design
2. Accessibility
3. Energy Efficiency

Design

While the most significant trend in arena design has seen the co-location of multiple uses in one building (including aquatic facilities, community centres, libraries, childcare centres and schools), arena design, in and of itself, has evolved to consider aspects of inclusion, safety and comfort for ice users and spectators. Current arena facilities are typically designed to ensure that:

- Dressing rooms are located on the same side as the benches, to ensure that coaches/ trainers are not crossing the ice to access the benches.
- Spectator access to seating areas is separated from the access to the dressing rooms, to limit the level of interaction between spectators and participants.
- A minimum of 6 dressing rooms are provided for each ice pad, to allow space before and after each ice allotment for the change over of groups/ teams.
- Smaller, non-gender dressing rooms are typically provided so that entire change rooms are not occupied by one or two people, and allowing for the change over function between time slots to be retained.
- Each dressing room is typically provided with two shower heads, a drying area, a toilet and sink, as well as a urinal, although a urinal is not always provided.
- One referee room is typically provided for each ice pad (though sometimes two rooms are provided recognizing that a refereeing crew may be composed of different genders).
- In addition to the dressing rooms, gender neutral washrooms are being implemented in most community recreation facilities, as well as a universal washroom.
- Both warm and cold viewing areas are provided for spectators.
- Dryland training/warm-up spaces are provided and can also function as multi-use spaces.
- Natural light is being integrated into many facilities, both in viewing areas and for the ice surfaces. It is important to ensure that any glazing does not create glare or “hot spots” on the ice surface.
- In light of experiences with COVID 19, reducing the number of touchable devices is being considered, including door operators, plumbing fixtures and washroom accessories.

Accessibility

Requirements of the *Ontario Building Code* and *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* are integrated into the design of current arena facilities, extending beyond mobility considerations to include visual, aural, and cognitive design considerations as follows:

- Access to the facility and change room areas is provided via automatic sliding doors.
- A minimum of one change room is typically designed to meet accessibility requirements outlined in the Ontario Building Code.
- Viewing areas include space for visitors using wheelchairs or mobility aids, designed at a height to allow for viewing of the ice surface.
- Visual contrast is provided between floors and walls, as well as walls and doors.
- Enhanced sound systems (e.g. “soundfield” equipment) provided in viewing areas.
- Wayfinding is designed to be accessible for individuals with visual and cognitive issues.

Energy Efficiency

Arena facilities consume significant amounts of energy. As a result, many technologies have been developed to address energy efficiency, including:

- Capturing heat generated in the process of ice-making to provide in-floor heat in dressing rooms and other warm spaces.
- Super-insulating the ice pad area.
- Insulating the dressing rooms to prevent heat loss and condensation issues.
- Providing CO₂ detectors in viewing areas to allow for demand control ventilation.
- Utilizing natural light throughout the facility.

2.3 Arena Site Selection Criteria

Arenas have historically played an important role as community gathering places where sport, physical activity and social connections are encouraged. Arenas are land-intensive facilities due to the size of their ice pads, multiple dressing rooms, other amenities (such as halls or program rooms), and their parking requirements. As community focal points and drive-to destinations, a number of criteria must be considered when selecting where to locate a future ice pad or arena.

Evaluating and selecting a preferred site for the proposed ice pad is important to its ultimate success. The location needs to be chosen with care, so as to embody as many key characteristics as possible. Maximizing accessibility to as many residents as possible (both now and in the future) should certainly be one of the key objectives; however, there is also a need to ensure that the site and its facility can be properly serviced, is compatible with adjacent land uses, can be developed cost effectively, and so on. The site can have a dramatic impact on the facility's construction cost. Land acquisition costs (if applicable), servicing potential, stormwater management, traffic and road access, soil condition, available infrastructure, etc. can all result in significant budget implications.

The criteria articulated in Table 1 provide a strong rational basis for evaluating potential sites and have regard to the project objectives. While it is preferable for the selected site to demonstrate all of the criteria, it is possible that they all may not be able to be met. The criteria were applied to the WRC and NHCC whose site and building conditions are explained in greater detail in Section 2.4 and 2.5, respectively.

Based on a high level analysis relegated to the site selection criteria, the WRC site is the more optimal of the two. Both the WRC and NHCC sites are municipally owned, situated beside parks and outdoor recreational amenities located along or near major transportation corridors, and in areas that can be considered community focal points. However, the WRC site provides the following advantages to a greater degree than the NHCC:

- The WRC has undeveloped open space portions on its site and expansion could occur, if required, on one or more sports fields (there are undeveloped open spaces within other Township parks that could accommodate sports field relocations should the need arise).
- The WRC has a large parking lot and room to construct additional parking to support a third ice pad.
- The WRC has a centralized staff complement by way of its multi-use nature which offers efficiencies in staffing numbers, supervision, maintenance and programming.
- Traffic and noise impacts on surrounding land uses would be less intrusive at the WRC (whereas the NHCC is embedded within a residential neighbourhood).
- There are very few environmental or legal encumbrances at the WRC (whereas the NHCC is located in close proximity to a regulated flood plain).
- The site is accessible in a reasonable time by car for a number of residential areas in Wilmot, and areas near the WRC are being planned for future residential growth.

Table 1: Arena Site Selection Criteria

Considerations	Prospective Criteria	WRC	NHCC
Location & Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The site is within reasonable proximity to existing and future residential areas. – The site can be accessed from an arterial or collector road, is in the vicinity of a connected trail network, and has barrier-free access. 	✓ ✓	✓ ✓
Site Development Potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The site area and shape are sufficient for the proposed use and provide a reasonable level of flexibility in design. – The site is able to accommodate enough on-site and/or nearby parking for both patrons and staff. 	✓ ✓	
Community Compatibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The facility would be compatible (in terms of building design, scale, landscaping, setbacks, etc.) with the surrounding area/buildings. 	✓	
Known Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The site is not unduly impacted by a geographic barrier (e.g. watercourse, rail line), is not restricted by easement/man-made obstructions, does not require site decommissioning (e.g. brownfield), and is relatively flat. – Suitable infrastructure exists (e.g. sewers, water, etc.) on the site or can be reasonably extended to the site. – The site does not require the demolition of a significant building or elimination of necessary parkland, parking or other vital land use. 	✓ ✓ ✓	 ✓ ✓
Planning Approval Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The site is capable of complying with applicable planning policies. 	✓	✓
Availability of Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The site is owned by the Township or can be acquired for a reasonable price. 	✓	✓
Focal Point Potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The site is at a visible location within the community. – The site is located at or has the potential to be a community focal point. 	✓ ✓	✓ ✓
Expansion Potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The site possesses long-term expansion potential for municipal uses. 	✓	
Amenity Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The site has the ability to enhance and support other facilities, accommodate potential partners, and generate increased usage due to proximity to other locations. – The site offers the potential for economies of scale in construction and/or operation due to the co-location of other municipal and/or community services. – The site has the ability to incorporate outdoor parkland/features. 	✓ ✓ ✓	 ✓

2.4 Wilmot Recreation Complex: Opportunities & Constraints

Site Conditions

The WRC is located at 1291 Nafziger Road in Baden, situated at the intersection with Highway 7/8. The WRC is easily identified and accessible to both local and regional markets by virtue of its centralized location between Wilmot's two primary settlements and access to the Highway 7/8 corridor that links Stratford to Kitchener-Waterloo and beyond.

The developed portion of the site occupies approximately 11.05 hectares. The WRC property includes the Schmidt Woods located immediately to the east of the community centre and sports fields along with an internal laneway running to the north and east of the site that connects Nafziger Road to Gingerich Road. Situated immediately to the north of the WRC property is a 6.6 hectare undeveloped woodlot that is also owned by the Township.

The developed portion of the site contains the WRC building, several sports fields, a playground and splash pad, and public parking. The Township's Parks & Facilities Operations Centre is housed at the north end of the building and an unsecured materials storage area is found across the laneway. A stormwater management pond is situated north-west of the WRC building while there are two undeveloped open space portions of land fronting Nafziger Road on either side of the entranceway.

Figure 1: WRC Site Context



Building Conditions

The WRC was constructed in two phases, the first in 2007 consisting of the two arenas and the second phase adding the indoor aquatic centre and multi-purpose program rooms in 2012. The WRC occupies a gross floor area of approximately 163,000 square feet.

A Building Condition Assessment was completed in 2020.¹ It found that the poured concrete slab and foundation walls to be in good condition with some cracks found in the structure likely due to settlement. Window and the metal roofs on the arena and pools are in good conditional and with no reports of leaking. Air conditioning and heating units are is fair condition needing to be replaced in the next 5-10 years. Interior finishes are in good condition with some regular maintenance to dressing rooms and rink area required. Overall, the BCA found the main issue to be worn sealants.

Of the \$1.2 million identified for the WRC in the Township's 10-year Capital Expenditure Summary between 2021 and 2030, arena-specific projects include \$670,000 for an 'arena refrigeration system maintenance plan' with other costs shared with other components in the community centre (e.g. aquatics).

As a relatively modern facility, the WRC was designed with barrier-free accessibility in mind and is thus considered to be highly accessible; however, current OBC and AODA requirements should be factored into long-range budgets for facility upgrades.



Wilmot Recreation Complex Event Rink & Ice Resurfacer Corridor

¹ Township of Wilmot. 2020. Building Condition Assessment: Final Report #2 – CC, RC & Admin. Buildings.

Facility Fit / Expansion Potential

The WRC is well suited to accommodate a third and fourth ice pad (the latter if required longer-term) due to the extensive site area available. An addition of this scale can be accommodated to the southwest of the existing arena / ice pad volume, but would require the relocation of existing parking as well as the reorganization of the traffic pattern with particular attention devoted to ensure a safe and efficient facility drop-off area(s).

Site Opportunities

- The consolidation of recreational services in the Township is well served through the WRC whereby locating both of its ice surfaces in this building creates efficiencies in terms of public access and staffing, and strengthens the potential for attracting/hosting tournaments.
- The WRC is central to and integrated with the planned Active Transportation Corridors being constructed to link the growing communities of Baden and New Hamburg, as well as more broadly to connections in Waterloo Region and Oxford County.
- The expansion of the entrance area to connect the existing building to the addition provides opportunity to create additional drop-off areas, as well as other common spaces.
- Creation of a new internal laneway can help to alleviate issues associated with the current drop-off area.
- The service lane can be extended at the north side of the building to access the addition.
- An upgraded refrigeration system to support the new ice pad(s), as well as the existing ice pads can be investigated.
- The facility can remain in operation during the construction of the addition.

Site Constraints

- The volume of traffic on this site would be increased significantly, and would have to be considered in the re-design of traffic circulation patterns.
- The reconfiguration or relocation of some soccer fields would be required to create a new access lane and provide additional parking on site that would be required to support a new ice pad(s). A cursory review of, sports fields could be considered at existing parks and open spaces owned by the Township or through future parkland developments.
- Exiting from the existing ice pads would have to be maintained/ considered in the construction of the new ice pad addition.

2.5 New Hamburg Community Centre: Opportunities & Constraints

Site Conditions

The New Hamburg Community Centre is located at 251 Jacob Street in New Hamburg. It forms part of a broader 9.8 hectare site that is fully developed with the NHCC building, the Royal Canadian Legion, three ball diamonds, covered stadium bleachers, pavilion, playground, running track and public parking. There is an internal pathway through the site connecting each amenity. This site is located on a flood plain with the Nith River running along the east side of the property, with a significant grade differential between the NHCC and the rest of the park site.

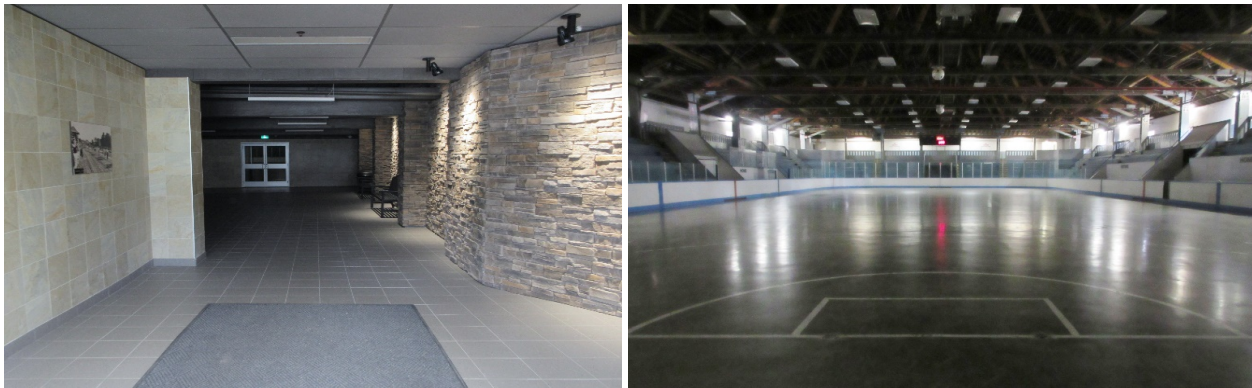
Figure 2: New Hamburg Site Context



Building Conditions

The New Hamburg Community Centre was originally constructed in 1948 with a northern addition built in 1984 and a more recent lobby renovation in 2014 to improve the entryway. The NHCC occupies a gross floor area of approximately 39,000 square feet consisting of a community centre and an arena.

The NHCC was built as an arena and previously used as such until the opening of the WRC twin-pad arena. Since that time, NHCC has been used as a “warm” dry pad facility. Other components of the community centre include a hall/auditorium located on the second floor, a dedicated space for a theatre tenant, meeting rooms, a common entry foyer, public washrooms and other ancillary spaces. There is an existing freight elevator between the main and second floor levels (not for public use) along with a small service basement.



New Hamburg Community Centre Lobby & Dry Floor

A 2020 Building Condition Assessment found that the concrete walls exhibit stains due to moisture and high humidity which may be a result of basement flooding in 2017. A few cracks on the foundation walls and in the arena corridors were noted as well. The slab on grades were reported to generally be in good condition. The roof structure and supporting columns of the arena are in operating order but will need replacement in 5-10 years. The roof was recorded to be in fair condition with observations of sealant failures, deformed flashing, water ponding and vegetation on the surface. Windows are in operating order but are stated to need replacement in the next 5 to 10 years. Interior finishes on the upgraded section of the lobby are in good/very good condition but the older parts of the community centre and arena need some repairs and upgrades.²

A previous assessment completed by CIMCO³ in 2018 reported that *“As a high level budget it will be approximately \$680,000 - \$850,000 + HST to completely replace the refrigeration system including the rink slab. This budget is just for refrigeration related items. It does not include work such as concrete, insulation, forming and other work required to bring the plant room to compliance.”* During the process of removing the ammonia from the building in early 2021, CIMCO noted that a significant brine leak had occurred in the south side of the system and recommended soil testing to determine the extent of contamination and inform any cost estimates related to remediation.

The Township’s 10-year Capital Expenditure Summary identifies nearly \$900,000 specifically for the NHCC between 2021 and 2030. Half of this expenditure (\$450,000) is allocated to replacing the roof membrane with

² Township of Wilmot. 2020. Building Condition Assessment: Facilities Located at 251 Jacob St. New Hamburg (Ontario)

³ CIMCO Refrigeration. New Hamburg Community Centre – Refrigeration Equipment Life Cycle. Letter dated December 5, 2018

other notable costs including \$175,000 for structural repairs and \$186,000 for parking lot/sidewalk replacement and lot expansion.

Based on a review of documentation along with visual observations, the NHCC has a number of functional limitations that would need to be addressed beyond its refrigeration, roofing, and other elements noted in the 10-Year Capital Expenditure Summary. While the Township could reasonably expend a minimum of \$1.75 million⁴ to recommission the NHCC arena and provide an experience similar to that found at present based on the information above (i.e. no major improvements), the following additional costs could be expected:

- Accessibility upgrades in compliance with the AODA and related facility accessibility standards;
- Replacement of dasher boards and glass system;
- Replacement of the wooden spectator seating surrounding the ice pad as these have been documented⁵ to not meet current design Codes and Regulations;
- Dressing room / washroom additions, enhancements or renovations.

The Township engaged an engineering consultant in 2019 to look at the potential of recommissioning the NHCC. The study investigated three Options as follows, noting that it did not identify a preferred Option. However, the study offers a more realistic picture of facility development/redevelopment costs, in the range of \$6.5 million⁶ should the Township wish to recommission the NHCC for ice sports and arena activities.

Study Option	Notable Improvements	Cost Estimate (2019)
Option 1: Ice Rink	A 7,200 ft ² expansion to accommodate 4 full-size dressing rooms, 2 smaller dressing rooms and 2 referee rooms alongside a new slab and boards, ice plant, electrical system, etc.	\$6,452,750
Option 2: Ice Rink	A 5,200 ft ² expansion containing same features as Option 1 but scaled back in size and amenities (i.e. fewer dressing rooms with plumbing).	\$6,042,500
Option 3: Permanent Warm Facility	A 2,500 ft ² expansion accommodate 4 full-size dressing rooms and position the NHCC as permanent interior multi-purpose concrete pad facility to house any number of events and situations such as indoor lacrosse, roller skating and Civic events.	\$2,950,500

Source: New Hamburg Arena Re-Commissioning Study

It bears noting that costs of materials and construction have escalated significantly for recreation sector projects across the country in the time that the study was prepared while the \$6.5 million estimate does not account for a number of other structural, mechanical and functional upgrades that could escalate the price further. On this basis, it is reasonable to expect that the cost to recommission and meaningfully enhance the NHCC to meet modern standards could be similar to those incurred for new arena construction.

⁴ Derived from 10-Year Capital Expenditure Summary and CIMCO Refrigeration quotation

⁵ NA Engineering Associates Inc. 2019. New Hamburg Arena Re-Commissioning Study. p.22

⁶ Ibid. NA Engineering Associates Inc. pp.22-29

Facility Fit / Expansion Potential

The New Hamburg Community Centre, while significant in terms of its place in the community as a gathering space and proximity to other adjacent recreational spaces, is a more challenging candidate for consideration as a third pad, due to the limited site area noted above, lack of on-site parking as well as its proximity to the flood plain. The original ice pad volume has a historic character but is limited in its use as a full-service arena due to the size of the ice pad. The 1984 addition poses significant challenges in terms of accessibility and contemporary expectations in arena design, as there are inconsistent floor levels on the main floor, there are no accessible washrooms, change rooms are smaller than current standards, spaces are cramped and confined, and there is no accessible route to the second floor common spaces.

Opportunities

- As noted above, the site is well-located in terms of its location in the community, promoting opportunities for walkability within the community of New Hamburg.
- The site provides the Township of Wilmot with an alternative recreation centre, along with the adjacent open space uses.
- The original ice pad structure has a romantic character, which could be enhanced through careful renovation to provide a unique player/spectator/user experience.
- Existing on-site parking could be reorganized (possibly by constructing a small lot on the open space immediately south of the existing building along Jacob Street), and provide a vehicular drop-off.

Constraints

- The size of the ice pad limits the use of this facility for (hockey) game and tournament play; resizing of the ice pad is possible, but would be a costly endeavour.
- A new refrigeration plant would be required, as the existing plant has been decommissioned, along with a new rink floor including brine lines and headers.
- Significant upgrade is required to the existing building, and will be required regardless of future use.
- Support spaces do not meet current arena expectations, and would require construction of new change rooms/ washrooms etc.
- A significant grade change on the east side of the building limits its usage as a potential area for expansion; this area is also within the GRCA floodplain.
- It is anticipated that climate change will continue to expand floodplain areas, further impacting the east side of the site.
- The age of the structure and original building system may not readily support improvements required to attain the Township's long-term sustainability and energy/water conservation objectives.
- Renovation/ expansion work would likely require the closure of the facility during renovation.

2.6 New Arena Site

Assembling new land for future arena site would provide the Township with flexibility to configure the site in a manner that is not subject to constraints of existing buildings, sports fields, etc. Depending on the size of the property, there may be potential to include other community centre components though it bears noting that the 2017 Parks, Facilities & Recreation Services Master Plan did not recommend any new major indoor recreational spaces apart from the ice pad. Any new lands acquired by the Township, however, should be large enough to accommodate a second phase arena expansion and associated additional parking in the event that a fourth ice pad is required in Wilmot.

In the event that a new arena site is being contemplated, the following criteria should be met at a minimum:

- The lands are large enough to allow future arena expansion and/or addition of other community facilities if required in the future;
- The site is centrally located between Baden and New Hamburg which will remain as the Township's primary urban settlements and home to the majority of Wilmot's population;
- The site offers strong access to major transportation corridors;
- The site is not constrained by environmental, geotechnical, or other constraints that would substantially escalate site preparation and development works;
- The site is serviced for hydro, water, and sewer or is in a location where extension of infrastructure servicing is being contemplated.

In the event that the Township does not already own a parcel of land that meets the above noted minimum criteria, it is likely that land purchase will be required. There may also be an opportunity to consider land swaps or other means permitted by the Ontario Planning Act to work with local landowners/developers to obtain the requisite amount of land. Unlike the WRC, the Township could also expect to incur site preparation and servicing costs for a new parcel of land.

2.7 Preferred Site for Third Ice Pad

Based on an analysis of site and buildings conditions for the WRC and NHCC, the WRC is the preferred location for the third ice pad. It would allow the Township to continue centralizing arena operations to the benefit of arena users and staff by virtue of the economies of scale generated. Doing so would not require the Township to assemble new lands thereby saving real estate purchases and will further reinforce the WRC as the premier recreation destination in Wilmot. The fact that a potential fourth ice pad may fit on the site is also a major benefit in the event that local ice registration rates remain strong and return to pre-pandemic levels; the most recent Indoor Ice Usage and Needs Analysis Update⁷ estimated that a third ice pad could be at capacity as early as 2025 with a potential fourth pad required after the year 2031.

PREFERRED OPTION:

It is recommended that the Township of Wilmot construct its third ice pad by way of expanding the Wilmot Recreation Centre, designed and oriented in a manner that also allows for a potential fourth ice pad if required to meet post-2031 arena needs.

⁷ Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd. 2020. Indoor Ice Usage and Needs Analysis Update. p.19

3.0 Implementation & Next Steps

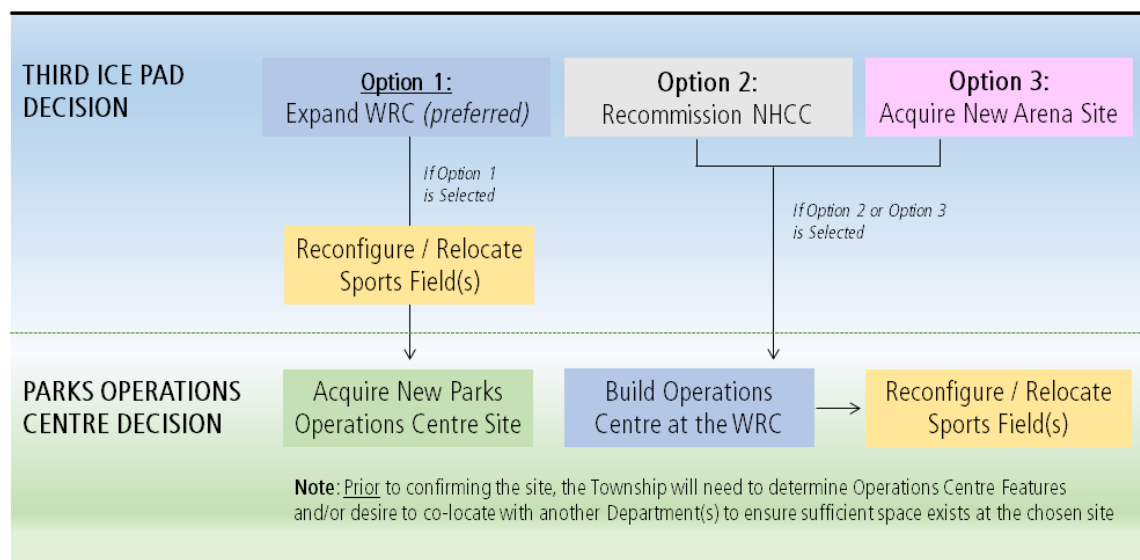
3.1 Summary of Options & Decision-Making Process

This Preliminary Findings Summary Report has identified that the WRC is the preferred option for an arena expansion. While the separately contained analysis for a new Parks & Facilities Operations Centre also demonstrates that such a facility could also fit at the WRC, the site is not deemed to be appropriate for both an arena expansion and a new operations centre due to factors such as:

- A high level of intensity from public use / programming and staff operations leading to the potential for conflicts between public and operational uses.
- An inability for either the arena or operations centre to be meaningfully expanded in response to ongoing population growth and associated level of service increases beyond the next 10 years.
- Limited operational efficiencies or gains from co-locating arena operations with parks and facilities operations (i.e. there is no compelling rationale to continue co-locating these uses at the WRC moving forward).
- A preference to relegating the WRC as Wilmot's primary focal point for recreation that could be undermined aesthetically and functionally if integrating an expanded operations centre and yard.

The preferred approach would be to prioritize recreation facilities and programs at the WRC since it is recognized as the Township's premier recreational destination by way of the ice pad, aquatics centre, multi-purpose program spaces and other community centre components, rectangular fields, and splash pad. Providing a third ice pad onsite is also deemed to create greater operational efficiencies for the Township and arena users than creating a single pad arena elsewhere (whether in New Hamburg or a new site), and these efficiencies would also be greater than retaining parks and facilities operations at the WRC.

The following decision-tree summarizes the preliminary findings and articulates the next steps in this study, and how it may affect decision-making for a new Parks & Facilities Operation Centre (including whether to relocate sports fields required to support an arena expansion as part of the new operations centre as well).



3.2 Arena Implementation

The ordered tasks below are intended to guide the Township of Wilmot in the development of the proposed arena project using a conventional Design-Bid-Build (DBB) delivery methodology. DBB is the most common project delivery method though others may be considered by the municipality such as design-build, integrated project delivery, etc.

1. Decision of Preferred Capital Project – the Township will confirm the preferred option (invest in the WRC) and identify an order of magnitude cost estimate in its long-term capital forecast; interim asset management and financial management decisions will reflect this decision.
2. Acquisition of consultants – assuming a DBB method, a Request For Proposal may be issued for a project manager to provide services through the life of the project; the project manager would develop a procurement strategy and lead the procurement of other consultants, including an architect for preliminary design.
3. Functional program – the general recommendations of this Study will be further elaborated to define the specific requirements for the facility, typically defined by an architect.
4. Schematic design – includes floor plans and elevations and shows the character and materials to be used in the building.
5. Allocation of funds – the project budget is re-assessed to make a determination of how, and when, to proceed; this is an appropriate stage to commence fundraising effort.
6. Construction document preparation – includes design development and the preparation of tender documents, sufficient for preliminary site plan approval; on completion of the tender documents a pre-tender Class B estimate to within 10% of the contract cost can be developed.
7. Tendering and award – tender documents are issued and interested general contractors (or pre-qualified bidders) develop submissions and pricing, which are formally evaluated by the Township and its project manager; the lowest priced bid that meets the tender requirements may be awarded the contract.
8. Construction – the successful bidder will construct the project in accordance with the construction documents, with significant oversight from the Township and its project manager.
9. Commissioning – this process ensures that the Township's requirements are incorporated into the design, are built, and are configured to produce the required result (often achieved with the assistance of a Commissioning Agent); move-in follows, which can require considerable advance coordination
10. Decommissioning – should the Township decide to close the NHCC as an ice venue, decommissioning of the ice plant will be required once the replacement arena opens; decisions around future repurposing of the NHCC should be considered in advance, with input from the community.

The implementation process for this project is anticipated to take a minimum of two years given the need to receive final approval, secure funding, establish partnership parameters (if applicable), complete the design and tender process, and to construct/reconstruct the facility.

3.3 Next Steps

The information and proposed directions contained in this Preliminary Findings Report is scheduled for presentation to Township of Wilmot Council on November 8, 2021. Township Council will be requested to provide direction to Township Staff and the Consulting Team as to whether it generally agrees with the locations identified for the third ice pad.

Upon receiving Council direction, the Consulting Team will test the preferred option with stakeholders and the public, undertake any refinements to conceptual plans as well as prepare capital and operating cost estimates with the assistance of Township Staff. The Third Ice Pad Location Study will be presented back to Township Council for consideration in 2022.