



PARKS, FACILITIES AND RECREATION SERVICES *Staff Report*

REPORT NO: PFRS 2021-019

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: December 6, 2021

SUBJECT: Third Ice Pad Location Study – Public Consultation Summary Report

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Third Ice Pad Public Consultation Summary Report be received;

AND FURTHER THAT staff be directed to proceed with a conceptual design and order of magnitude costing for a third ice pad at the Wilmot Recreation Complex site as recommended by consultants Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd. and supported by public consultation;

AND FURTHER THAT staff be directed to present the conceptual design and order of magnitude costing to Council in Q1 of 2022.

SUMMARY:

On November 8, 2021, Council approved staff report PFRS 2021-018, Third Ice Pad Study Preliminary Findings Report. The report included the following recommendations:

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.

As a result, staff initiated an online public survey on Friday November 12th that closed on November 26th. The results of the survey are included in this report and support moving forward with a conceptual design and order of magnitude pricing for a third rink to be located at the Wilmot Recreation Complex (WRC).

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.

On November 8, 2022, the Preliminary Findings Study prepared by Monteith Brown included 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.”

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, and Wilmot District Soccer Club (WDSC), and presented their findings to Council on November 8, 2021.

Arena user groups were supportive of the consultant recommendation to pursue a third ice pad and indicated that the WRC was their preferred location. All arena groups also supported an NHL-regulation ice pad (200’ x 85’) with a minimum of 6 dressing rooms, seating typical of a community rink, and adequate storage.

Through Council approval of the Preliminary Findings Report, staff proceeded with the next step in the public consultation process which included an online survey available to the general public. The following questions were included in the online survey:

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.

This report presents the public consultation results of the online survey, which are supportive in moving forward with a conceptual design at the proposed WRC location.

REPORT:

The online public consultation survey, hosted on the Township website and promoted via social media, provided an opportunity for the members of the broader Wilmot community to comment on the recommendation to locate a third ice pad on the preferred site of the WRC as identified by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd.

The survey experienced a considerable level of engagement with 362 responses in total. While not all public responses have been included within this report, a summary has been provided by Monteith Brown, with an additional sampling of comments included in Appendix A.

Survey Results

The survey questions produced the following results:

Place of Residency

The majority of respondents were residents of Wilmot Township, representing 334 submissions (92% of total responses), while the remaining 28 responses (8%) were provided by non-residents.

Users of the Wilmot Recreation Complex & Group Affiliation

A total of 358 responses (99%) were submitted by individuals that identified themselves as being a current user of the Wilmot Recreation Complex; while just 4 responses were received from persons that did not identify as users. A further analysis revealed that:

- 215 respondents (59%) were affiliated with the New Hamburg Hockey Association,
- 132 respondents (36%) were with Wilmot Girl's Hockey Association, and
- 57 respondents (16%) were with New Hamburg Skating Club,
- 7 respondents (2%) were with the New Hamburg Firebirds and
- 4 respondents (1%) were Wilmot Junior C Lacrosse.

This indicates strong representation in responses from the Township's three (3) largest users of ice time. It also bears noting that 24 responses (7%) were received from "Other" organizations (including aquatic users, pick-up hockey leagues, and outdoor recreation users, etc.) while 27 responses were provided by individuals that do not belong to an organized league or user group. In addition, 80 respondents (22%) identified themselves as belonging to the Wilmot Soccer Club.

Agreement with the Preliminary Recommendation

The Wilmot Recreation Complex was the most supported location for a third ice pad with 47% of submissions expressing that this would be their preferred choice. Common reasons cited for this level of support included:

- Convenient location and co-location with other recreational components were optimal;
- Space exists onsite to accommodate the expansion;
- Already having existing arenas onsite would be convenient for people and conducive to tournament use;
- Perception that there could be land cost and operating cost savings through co-location; and
- Availability of parking.

Another 44% of respondents stated that they would support a third ice pad anywhere in Wilmot or did not have an opinion where it should go, largely on the basis that they were simply pleased to see the Township making additional investments in the arena supply.

The New Hamburg Community Centre was the preferred choice for 5% of respondents, many of whom suggested a nostalgia for what was affectionately referred to as “the old barn” as well as some that would like to see arenas geographically spread throughout the two urban settlements. A very small percentage (2%) either suggested a different location or stated that they did not support another ice pad in Wilmot.

Recommendation and Next Steps

Based on the results of the online survey with 329 out of 362 (91%) responses preferring either the WRC or any location for a third rink, and the consultation results from Monteith Brown’s WRC user group interviews, this report recommends that Council direct staff to proceed with WRC as the site to complete the conceptual design and high-level costing.

Once this step is completed in early 2022, and pending the outcome of Capital budget deliberations, the next step would be engaging an architect or design build contractor to begin detailed design work for the third rink.

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:

The endorsement of the Wilmot Recreation Complex as the preferred location will trigger additional capital spending associated with the Conceptual Design, Detailed Design and future construction of a third ice pad. The capital costs and timing for each of these stages of the project will be incorporated within the updated 10-Year Capital Forecast.

ATTACHMENTS: Appendix A – Survey Results Summary of Comments Received

Appendix A – Survey Results Summary of Comments Received

1) WRC as Preferred Location (47%)

- The WRC would be our preferred location.
- "Wilmot Recreation Complex is a great centralized location for the township. There is already adequate parking in the area, and the proximity to the highway is surely appreciated by visiting teams.
- "I think the Wilmot Recreation Complex is an ideal location for the third (or fourth) ice pad. I am hopeful there will be more community engagement with the design aspect of the upcoming build, as certain aspects of WRC are less than ideal, and hopefully can be considered when designing the new facility.
- We can't wait for the construction to start and our children to be able to utilize the new facility!!"It would be nice if it was at the rec. center. But ultimately just another ice pad would be good!
- It's too bad the old arena couldn't be recommissioned, but WRC seems to make the most sense for a new ice pad. It will be important to ensure adequate parking and a sensible site layout because it is already a very busy place!
- Yes, great idea to expand to provide more at this already ideal location!
- It would be beneficial to add the third ice pad to the WRC because there are already two there and the ease of use would be high. The WRC already has accessibility and is in a great location for visiting teams and is fairly central in our Township.
- Best location for the third ice pad would be at the current Recreation Complex.
- It doesn't make much sense to me to be placing a new ice pad somewhere else in the community when we already have two in one spot"
- The rec complex makes the most sense. The amount of money required to bring the old rink up to code would be better spent on a new modern facility.
- "Yes please! It should have been a 4-plex from the beginning."

2) Any Location

- Absolutely. Not enough ice time as it is. The expansion is needed as the population grows
- No matter where it is, a third ice pad is needed.
- It is long overdue. We are often having to find ice time outside of the township in Stratford and Wellesley for both the skating club and minor hockey.
- As a member of WGHA, we are routinely having to drive to Plattsville, and we have also used Tavistock, for ice. Adding another ice pad, will bring in more revenue for the township, opens up the ability to host other hockey

- tournaments which will again bring in more revenue. The need is absolutely there for the ice.
- Anywhere in wilmot- this is so needed
 - Don't care where just add one.

3) Reinstate New Hamburg Arena (5%)

- "The best option would be the old arena in New Hamburg on Jacob.
- I know the arena needs a lot of updates, however the township has the land already. Also the facility would be in great use the fair grounds being used for the Mennonite Relief, ball tournaments, Mopar fest. Also a community center that is within walking distance from the core of New Hamburg."
- I think it would be great to recommission the old NH arena, however there would need to be something done for parking, as there is very limited spots available
- Reopen the old New Hamburg Arena
- "The Beautiful Old Barn!
- The community centre downtown, the traffic in and out of the existing etc centre is already brutal and turning into and out of the centre is a challenge, should have a turning lane. Putting one there you will lose parking or soccer fields so not a great solution
- "The old arena downtown has a nostalgic feel to it and would play great for young kids and parents to take their kids to ""the old barn"".

4) Do Not Build Another Rink (2%)

- This is a waste of tax payers money, we do not need a third ice pad. Stop wasting money on hockey!!
- Instead of building a third ice pad maybe add more variety based courts, possibly a badminton court which could likely easily be converted into a tennis or volleyball court (this could go along creating a league for these sports), a basketball court would likely be very popular as well.
- Do we need more ice? What about more pool time - hockey hockey hockey ... there is more to life and more to Wilmot than ice rinks. I vote for no new ice pad and instead more swimming options."

Other Comments of Interest

- Removing trees from Schmidt Wood would not be ideal. Currently the entrance road to the left behind the ice pad facilities is a blind corner and too narrow. This should either be wider (woods would have to be trimmed back) or removed completely for safe traffic flow.
- There is already two ice pads yet no gym. What about the other sports such as basketball, volleyball, pickleball, badminton, etc? Why are the other members of our community ignored. Not every member of this community is

involved with hockey. For such a large recreation centre not to have a gymnasium is unacceptable. Before you even consider putting in a third pad think of the other citizens of our area. We all want to enjoy this centre not just the few privileged ones.

- I don't disagree that the Rec Centre is likely the most appropriate and cost effective location, but I'm not a user of the ice surface; I use the swimming pool, the soccer fields, the playground and splash pad, and Schmitt Woods trails. I would be very disappointed to see any of these other amenities reduced or displaced to make more room for ice pads.
- A concern I have is that recreational facilities in our settlement areas are aging. As we look to further invest in the WRC, I believe this may create a challenge to smaller community-based facilities becoming further aged, without significant investment, obsolete, or at greater cost as we prioritize the build of this proposed project.