

Staff Report

Original signed by: Deputy City Manager Bolton

Report Date: May 8, 2019
Meeting Date: May 13, 2019 – North Cariboo Joint Planning Committee
To: City Manager
From: Director of Community Services
Subject: West Fraser Centre Enhancements Update

PURPOSE

To provide an update on the status of various projects at the West Fraser Centre that have been completed or are in progress as a result of input from stakeholders and/or the community-at-large.

SUMMARY

- Staff provided an update to the Joint Planning Committee in April 2018 on the status of various projects and initiatives to enhance the West Fraser Centre based on input from stakeholders and the community-at-large after the facility opened.
- Two ice seasons have now ended since the West Fraser Centre opened in September 2017.
- Staff met with the arena stakeholder groups regularly prior to the facility opening and again shortly after it opened in order to obtain feedback about the facility and improvements that would enhance the facility and make it more functional.
- Community members have also provided feedback to staff and elected officials directly or via social media since the facility opened.
- The Committee has had discussion regarding a number of projects that may enhance the facility that are in various stages of completion.
- An update on the status of these projects and initiatives is provided for the Committee's information, consideration, and direction where appropriate.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- This report is provided for information.
- There are no direct funding implications unless the Committee chooses to proceed immediately with a project that requires funding and has not been included in the 2019 NCRP budget.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT this report be received for information

BACKGROUND:

West Fraser Mural:

- The Joint Planning Committee provided approval for West Fraser to have a 3-D mural installed on the wall adjacent to the concession on the second floor concourse.



- The mural is of a forest under northern lights segmented by a wave of wood panels. The West Fraser Story is told in story boards between each section of the mural.
- The mural artist has completed much of the work off site but is awaiting final approval of text which will be incorporated into the mural telling the West Fraser Story.
- Some modifications to the design were required to address exiting requirements and some wall fixtures were relocated in preparation for the installation.
- The mural installation is expected to occur within the next few weeks.
- The cost of installation will be borne entirely by West Fraser at no cost to NCRP.

Walking Track:

- This project was completed in the spring/summer of 2018 at no cost to NCRP.
- The City was successful in obtaining a \$30,000 Canadian Tire Stewardship Fund grant to install rubberized flooring in the concourse.
- West Fraser paid for the balance of the cost as part of their pledge of \$1m toward the West Fraser Centre.

Event Hosting Precinct:

- The City received a \$574,191 grant from Northern Development Initiative Trust for a comprehensive event hosting initiative for the West Fraser Centre, Curling Club, Arena 2, and the plaza between the WFC and Curling Rink.
- The total project budget is \$702,180 with additional funding contributions from West Fraser, the Curling Club and an in-kind contribution from C&C Wood Products.
- The balance of funding came from funding that had already been allocated in the NCRP 2018 capital budget for project components that were included as part of this larger project. No incremental NCRP funding was required.
- Components of the project that are complete include:
 - Upgrades to the Curling Centre including the lounge improvements, new scoreboards, exterior insulation and siding, and fire doors.
 - IT upgrades including the installation of a CCTV system and television screens in the curling centre, West Fraser Centre, and Arena 2
 - Siding on two sides of the ice plant
 - A feature wall in the West Fraser Centre main stairwell using local wood products
 - Two of three murals, one on the exterior of Arena 2 and one in the front entrance of the West Fraser Centre behind the art installation 'Four Musicians'.
 - Extension of power to the plaza to support events in the plaza that require access to electricity such as food vendors.
 - The purchase of a large portable stage for the West Fraser Centre
 - Installation of automatic door openers on washrooms in the West Fraser Centre
- Components of the project that in progress:



- Completion of a mural on the exterior of the curling centre.
- Completion of plaza improvements including installation of benches, waste containers, bike racks, feature rocks, fencing, and a trellis.
- Installation of an electronic reader board on the exterior of the West Fraser Centre
- Installation of a gazebo in Lebourdais Park
- It is anticipated that the project will be fully complete this spring.

Visibility Issues

- Concern has been expressed that the railings in the West Fraser Centre create visibility issues for spectators in the seating area outside the Dunkley Room and on the north side of the building.
- The estimated cost to upgrade the railings is approximately \$100,000. This work could be phased into sections to improve visibility in one (or more) section at a time, which would reduce the financial impact in a single year.
- Staff have had discussions with West Fraser regarding the possibility of funding some or all of this project with the balance of funding they committed to the construction of the West Fraser Centre.
- Currently no funding is allocated in the budget to complete this work.

Air Conditioning

- While the building is better insulated than Arena 1 and includes heat pumps to provide cooling in offices and the downstairs lobby, the spectator area and arena floor becomes uncomfortably warm when we have extremely hot weather, especially when large spectator crowds are present.
- \$75,000 was allocated in the 2019 capital budget to install air conditioning to the arena floor and spectator areas.
- A Northern Development Initiative Trust grant was secured for \$60,000 toward the cost of the project.
- Installation is in progress. The project is expected to be complete in the next few weeks, prior to graduation ceremonies.

History of Ice Sport Exhibit

- A donor has offered to sponsor an exhibit in the West Fraser Centre that showcases the history of ice sport in Quesnel.
- A location for this exhibit has been identified in the concourse across from the Dunkley Room.
- Museum staff have been working with the donor on the concept and content for this display.
- Once the design is finalized the concept will be shared with the Committee.
- The costs of the project will be borne by the donor, with no funding from NCRP.



Concession Upgrades:

- Concerns were expressed by stakeholder groups and the community-at-large about the concession throughout the 2017/2018 season.
- The City took over operations of the concession from a private operator for the 2018/2019 season.
- While some concerns have been expressed regarding the hours of operation, the feedback from stakeholders and community-at-large have been largely positive.
- Now that the season is over, staff are undertaking a detailed review of the first season of operation.
- It is clear that operating the concession is not profitable however it does provide an important service to users and spectators.
- It is anticipated that the facility will soon be licensed for events. Alcohol sales may help improve the concession's bottom line.
- No renovations have been made to the concession to accommodate a deep fryer or flattop grill, which places limitations on items that can be sold through the concession.
- The estimated cost to install an exhaust fan to facilitate a deep fryer and flattop grill in the concession is estimated to be \$80,000 - \$120,000.
- Because the concession is too small to accommodate a deep fryer and grill it would be necessary to expand and renovate the concession and purchase this equipment in addition to the installation of the exhaust fan.
- The amount of revenue generated by the concession is unlikely to payback the cost of renovating the concession.
- While there will always be people who would like the concession to sell fried food, staff are of the opinion that a renovation of the concession should be regarded as a low priority in light of the cost and the fact that users appear reasonably satisfied with the menu selections offered.

Accessibility Issues in Spectator Areas:

- Handrails are not required by building or fire codes in arena spectator areas and as such arenas like the West Fraser Centre, are often constructed without them.
- After the West Fraser Centre opened however, concerns were raised by stakeholders and the community-at-large regarding accessibility issues in the spectator areas.
- A meeting was held in 2018 on site with a number of advocates for seniors and people with a disability to consider options to address accessibility concerns.
- A number of measures were taken following the meeting to address these concerns including the establishment of spectator areas on the top level of the concourse marked with blue paint and signage that says 'Preferred seating for seniors, people with a disability, and their companions'.
- Seats in these designated areas were moved back to provide more space for people with walkers and similar devices.



- Yellow strips were added to all of the stairways in the spectator seating areas to aid people with visibility issues and a single row of handrails was installed in one of the seating sections as sample, to access their functionality.
- The intent was to re-evaluate the impact of these changes and continue to make changes as required by incrementally adding handrails and additional preferred seating sections if required.
- Staff and some elected officials received feedback from spectators at the provincial curling play-downs in early 2019 requesting additional handrails in the spectator areas.
- The cost to install one row of handrails on the south side of the building in 2018 was \$5,000. Installing hand rails on both sides of each stairwell for the entire spectator area would likely cost approximately \$100,000. If handrails were installed on one side of each stairwell only instead of both sides, the cost would be approximately \$50,000.
- If the Committee would like to see additional handrails installed, it may not be necessary to install them all at once, in every spectator area, or on both sides of each stairway.
- Staff have had discussions with West Fraser regarding the possibility of funding some or all of this project with the balance of funding they committed toward the construction of the West Fraser Centre.
- No funding is allocated for this project in the current five year financial plan. The Committee may wish to defer the issue to the 2020 budget process for consideration.
- If the Committee would like to proceed immediately and recommend to the CRD Board that an allocation be made from capital reserves/surplus in 2019 to install some or all of the handrails in the spectator area, this funding decision should consider the overall NCRP budget and other capital priorities.

Memorabilia:

- During the transition to the West Fraser Centre, the priority was to ensure the facility opened on schedule. There wasn't an opportunity at the time to determine what to do with memorabilia like the banners, jerseys, and other items from Arena 1.
- 50 banners (approx. 11 Kangaroos, 5 Millionaires, 9 Lacrosse, and 25 Minor Hockey) and 4 jerseys (Minor Hockey) were removed from Arena 1. In addition, 19 Ringette banners are displayed in Arena 2.
- In April 2018 staff met with representatives of the arena user groups and it was agreed that only Provincial Championship banners or better won by Quesnel teams for an arena sport after September 2017 should be displayed in the West Fraser Centre. Banners won before September 2017 should be displayed in Arena 2.
- In May 2018 the Joint Planning Committee approved a policy regarding the display of banners in the West Fraser Centre and Arena 2 based on this agreement.
- Banners are initially displayed on the media booth and are then hung permanently in the concourse area facing the ice surface.
- The four jerseys in storage will be framed and mounted on the wainscoting at the east end of the facility under the score clock this spring/summer before the start of the ice season.



Stakeholder Requests:

- Staff held meetings with stakeholder groups on a regular basis prior to the completion of the West Fraser Centre and shortly after the facility opened to obtain feedback regarding the West Fraser Centre.
- Based on this feedback, a list was compiled of improvements that could be made to improve the functionality of the new arena.
- These requests included things like improvements to the media booth, installation of towel hook, paper towel dispensers, door locks, signage, mailboxes, lockers, clocks, bulletin boards, stick racks, storage cabinets, additional benches and other similar items, which have been absorbed into existing operating budgets.
- The majority, if not all, of these requests have been addressed through the operating budget.
- Quesnel Ringette donated funds to install a water bottle filling station near the player's bench and change rooms.
- West Fraser donated wood for additional benches in some of the dressing rooms as part of the \$1 million contribution to the construction of the facility.

OPTIONS:

1. Receive this report for information only
2. Receive this report for information and refer one or more of the unfunded or underfunded projects to the 2020 budget process for consideration as part of the five year financial plan.
3. Receive this report for information and recommend to the CRD Board of Directors that the 2019 budget be amended to allocate funds from surplus or capital reserves to proceed immediately with one or more of an unfunded or underfunded projects referenced in this report.
4. Any combination of the above.