



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

OPEN HOUSES FOR NEW RECREATION FACILITIES: SEPTEMBER 13 & 15, 2011

INTRODUCTION

The City of Calgary is developing four recreation facilities in northwest (Northwest Regional Recreation Facility) and southeast (Seton Regional Recreation Facility, Quarry Park Recreation Facility and Great Plains Recreation Facility) Calgary to address gaps associated with public recreation and leisure service provision within the city. A Program and Amenity Market Study was commissioned by The City to identify facility components and program elements for the recreation facilities, assess the impact of the facilities on current facilities serving market areas, and evaluate financial profitability for the facilities. A set of proposed facility components and program elements was presented to the public to obtain comments and feedback. Members of the public could provide their opinions on the recommendations through an online feedback form and open houses that were held in northwest and southwest Calgary. A total of 214 members of the public completed forms (either online or at the open houses) about the proposed facility components and program elements. This summary presents the key findings of comments and feedback provided by participants of the public engagement process.

GENERAL FINDINGS

The vast majority of input from members of the public was positive and supportive of recommended facility components and program elements - At least three quarters of participants who provided feedback about the northwest (78%) and southeast (76%) facilities agreed that the facility components and program elements would meet the recreation and leisure needs of the community. Indeed, when asked about overall impressions of the recommended facility components and program elements, it was common for participants to offer comments such as "excellent", "great" and "impressive". Other commonly cited feedback about overall impressions indicated the facilities were "comprehensive", offered "good variety" and should be developed as soon as possible.

Other comments included:

"I like the vision and the notion of building the facility for multi groups and the widest flexibility."

"Overall, it sounds fantastic. So many activities covered!"

"This is an impressive proposal."

"Seems very well planned and includes a good variety of activities."

"This seems like an excellent plan developed through a lot of community consultation."

"Comprehensive as it covers recreational and competitive pursuits."

Many participants liked the proposed aquatic, fitness training, ice rinks and library amenities proposed at the facilities - Many participants indicated that they liked specific types of amenities being proposed in the facilities; however, the most commonly cited amenities included aquatic (mainly leisure water, followed by opportunities for lap swimming and competition and training), fitness training, ice rinks and library amenities.

Comments included:

"Wave pool with a bunch of slides and features is really cool. Hopefully this means several slides, not just one thunder run or short slide."

"I like most: 1) the Leisure pool (zero depth entry, wave system, lazy river, spray features, water slides, hot tubs/steam room). 2) the Library."

"Our family would most likely use the aquatic facilities (both for swimming lessons and leisure activities) so would really like to see something similar to Southland Rec Centre. Will also appreciate the ice rinks and fitness programming offered."

"Very pleased about the provisions for competitive swimming and diving in addition to fun components in the aquatic centre."

Concerns expressed about the facilities included lack of specific amenities, transportation issues, affordability and timing - A number of participants identified specific amenities that they thought should be included in the recreation facilities. Some of the more notable suggestions offered by participants included indoor tennis courts (all facilities), ice rinks for hockey and ringette (northwest facility) or ice rinks in general (Quarry Park facility), a 50 metre pool (northwest facility), and outdoor sport fields (northwest facility) and indoor skateboard parks (all facilities). Transportation issues such as the capacity of existing roadways to support increased traffic to the facilities, parking and access by public transit were common concerns; as were ensuring the facilities are affordable and built as soon as possible.

Comments included:

"Like the approach to bring fitness & health to the community, and more importantly, would like to see tennis courts included in the facilities."

"Is the ice solely for recreational use? Or will it be flexible enough to accommodate hockey, as needed?"

"I'd like to see another competition-class 50m pool with bulkhead in the city of Calgary. Currently Lindsay Park and the University are the only two. There are a number of swim clubs in the city that would be able to utilize more pool time/space."

"I am hoping there are plans to widen Rocky Ridge Road north of Country Hills, as this will cause traffic congestion."

"Is it close to the future LRT station? The City is currently planning for Southeast LRT - is this project aligned?"

"Impressive plan! Are the programs affordable or is it going to be some rich people facility?"

"I like the concept of the facility, there is a great deal of this lacking in the far South of the city, and it is high time that was rectified."

FINDINGS FOR SPECIFIC FACILITIES

While some participants acknowledged that the Quarry Park Recreation Facility was effectively sized, others felt it should be larger - Some participants indicated that the size (and amenity composition) of the Quarry Park Recreation Facility was appropriate, given the market and other facilities serving the area, other participants felt that the facility should be larger and offer similar amenities to that being proposed for the Seton Regional Recreation Facility.

Comments included:

"Seems that it may be a bit small of a facility."

"No doubt it is needed not only for resident but for the business park."

"It seems unimpressive in comparison to Seton but I guess it may be fine since Seton isn't that far away."

"A great (smaller) alternative to the Seton location."

Some participants liked the intended purpose of Great Plains Recreation Facilities to address city-wide sport needs - Some participants acknowledged the overall vision of the Great Plains Recreation Facility as being sport-oriented with a city-wide range and being a venue for tournament opportunities.

Comments included:

"I like that it would become a hub for tournaments."

"I like that there would be a place focused strictly on teams. That way they wouldn't take up the use of the other (public) facilities."

"Love that it's a sport facility. No library or other non-athletic things."