

## **Cultural Hub and Greater Sudbury Event Centre Projects Update – February 18, 2025**

Presented To:	City Council
Meeting Date:	February 18, 2025
Type:	Presentations
Prepared by:	Tony Cecutti Growth and Infrastructure
Recommended by:	Chief Administrative Officer

### **Report Summary**

This report and presentation provides an update on the status of the Cultural Hub at Tom Davies Square and Greater Sudbury Event Centre projects.

### **Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Climate Action Plans**

This report responds to several elements of the 2019-2027 Strategic Plan including:

Objective 2.0 Economic Capacity and Investment Readiness

2.1 Build Economic Development Initiatives to Support Existing Businesses, Attract New Businesses and Promote Entrepreneurship,

2.4 Revitalize Greater Sudbury's Downtown and Town Centres with Public Investment that Support Private Investment

2.8 Invest in Transformative Facilities, Spaces and Infrastructure that Support Economic Activity

Objective 5.0 Create a Healthier and More Vibrant Community

5.2 Invest in Infrastructure to Support Community Recreation with Focus on Quality of Life

5.6 Align Initiatives with the Goal of Community Vibrancy

### **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

### **Background**

#### **Cultural Hub at Tom Davies Square (TDS)**

In November 2023 through Resolutions CC2023-287 to 290, Council directed staff to proceed with incorporating a new Cultural Hub at Tom Davies Square (TDS). With those resolutions, Council also established the project would have a total project budget of up to \$65M.

Over the period of 2024, staff have worked to advance the project as directed by Council. A brief summary of notable project achievements from the past year include:

- Federal announcement providing \$24.9 million from the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program that resulted from efforts to secure senior government funding;
- Council received a presentation of the Schematic Design, design renderings, and Class C cost estimate for the project in September 2024;
- Significant engagement has and will continue to influence the project through Open House Sessions, the Accessibility Advisory Panel, Indigenous Advisory Panel, Host Nations, and community groups.
- Staff researched, planned, and are successfully pivoting the project delivery and procurement model for the Cultural Hub at TDS to Construction Management (CM). This project is the first implementation of the CM model and will set the protocols for this model going forward. For reference, the Construction Management project delivery model was discussed with Council in November 2024.

## Analysis

Since the Construction Management discussion with Council, staff have successfully issued a Request for Prequalification for the Cultural Hub at Tom Davies Square. The prequalification generated significant interest resulting in the prequalification of six (6) firms that specialize in Construction Management of complex projects. The prequalified firms include:

- Aquicon Construction
- Ball Construction
- EllisDon Corporation
- PCL Constructors
- Percon Construction
- Pomerleau Inc.

A Request for Proposal (RFP) is being finalized for the project and is anticipated to be posted in early February. The RFP will establish an evaluation criteria for the proposals and provide the City's expectations and protocols to enter into and execute a construction management agreement.

The timing of the construction management RFP aligns well with the design progress of the Cultural Hub at TDS. The Construction Manager, once retained, will perform a review of the Design Development that is underway. The CM's design review will determine and comment on the constructability of the proposed design facilitating the opportunity to identify and rectify design risks early on.

Late in the Design Development phase, as the project design team is working toward a Class B cost estimate with the quantity surveyor (cost consultant), the CM will concurrently prepare an independent cost estimate to facilitate a cost reconciliation process, further reducing design risks as they pertain to the project budget. Once the process of Class B cost estimate reconciliation is complete, and the Design Development phase is concluded, staff will return to Council to present a detailed project update.

The timing of the RFP and the advancement of design continues to align with the project schedule presented to Council in September 2024. The RFP is targeting award in Q2 2025, with an anticipated start to construction in Q3 2025. As indicated to Council, the Construction Management project delivery model facilitates many tender packages to various subtrades, where the CM directly retains the subtrades. However, the CM must follow the City's established tendering protocols. This model will ease scheduling pressures as the project can begin early works and construction, while the final finishes are being designed.

## Financial Status

The following table provides a summary of budget and costs to date:

<b>Cultural Hub at Tom Davis Square Budget</b>	<b>\$65,000,000</b>
<b>Costs to date as of December 31, 2024</b>	<b>\$1,056,000 *</b>

\*Not including prior reported arena/event centre project and preparation costs of \$20,764,000 which were budgeted at \$25,000,000.

## **Next Steps**

1. Issue the RFP for Construction Manager for the Cultural Hub at Tom Davies Square.
2. Continue to pursue external funding sources for the Cultural Hub at TDS.
3. Staff, the design team, and the project partners will continue to work through the project design.
4. Continue to engage with various committees, stakeholders, and groups such as but not limited to the Accessibility Advisory Panel as the project evolves.

## **Background**

### **Event Centre Site Selection**

A comprehensive evaluation of all pertinent information was conducted to identify the optimal site for the new event centre. This site selection process was a distinct and collaborative exercise involving KKR advisors for their expertise in business development, the architectural team for their design and feasibility requirements, geotechnical engineers for their soil and subsoil condition assessments, and representatives from Engineering Services, Linear Infrastructure, Transit, and Planning Services. Major considerations and constraints discussed included existing municipal infrastructure and utilities, geotechnical conditions, development opportunities, and parking availability.

We identified a couple of significant utilities; a primary electrical duct bank under Shaughnessy St., managed by Greater Sudbury Utilities (GSU) and a trunk watermain under Elgin St, whose relocation could adversely impact the project's schedule and cost. Consequently, it was determined that avoiding these relocations would be preferable.

Two existing structures in the south district have been identified as significant for preservation. The analysis concluded that the proposed site for the new event centre must respect the Sudbury Theatre Centre and the Rail Station, maintaining their current locations.

Through supplemental investigations, it is understood that ground conditions are consistent throughout the south district. The soil capacity is considered to be weak and foundation support for large structures would likely require piles founded in bedrock. The elevation of the bedrock was found to be quite deep with a modest slope from south to north. Micro-pilings is the most common form of foundation used in this type of condition. The additional analysis shows that the cost and complexity of constructing foundations for the event centre does not vary substantially across the south district.

The new Event Centre will keep the dispersed parking model of the Sudbury Community Arena. The Downtown Master Plan team is planning to include parking impact reports for the Event Center and Cultural Hub to ensure adequate downtown parking. The footprint of the new event centre is slightly larger than the existing arena, therefore the net change in parking spots will depend on the future state of the property occupied by the existing arena. Available parking was not considered a significant factor in site selection as it is deemed necessary to make similar longer term parking plans in all options.

The site selected for the Event Centre occupies the blocks between Brady St & Elgin St, and Minto St and Shaughnessy St (see Figure 1 below). The selected site avoids the need for road realignments and major utility relocations. Additionally, there are opportunities to downsize or eliminate portions of the road network. This is expected to result in operational cost savings as well as capital infrastructure savings since most of the existing infrastructure is at or near the end of its life. The site solidly anchors the south downtown, offering redevelopment opportunities on three sides. It does not preclude other future development opportunities, such as hotel or conference centre developments. The location leverages existing under-utilized public spaces, such as memorial park and Tom Davies Square courtyard, for supporting programming during large events. It also has strong connectivity to existing travel paths from the north and

west via Minto St & Elgin St, aligning with current behavior patterns.

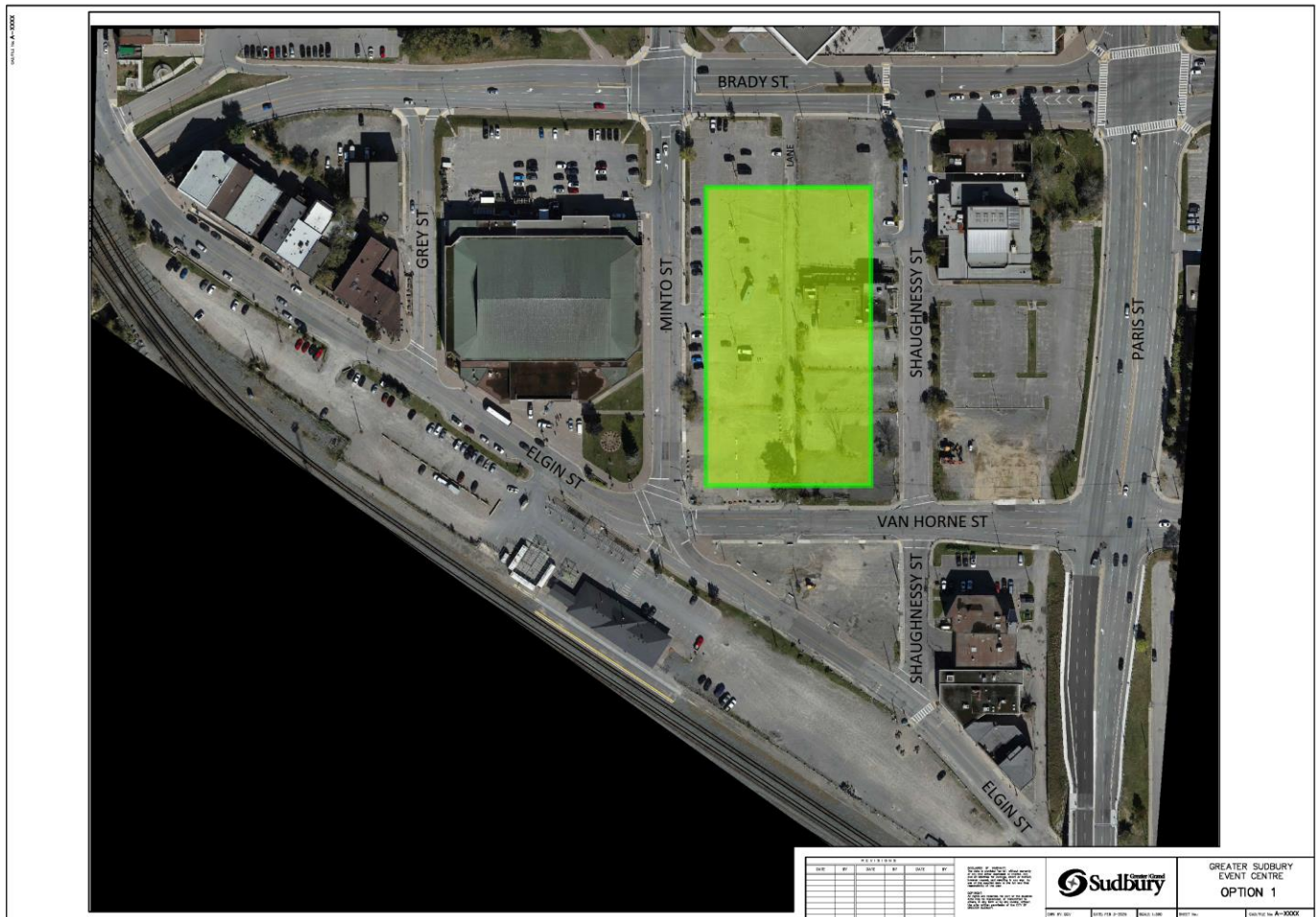


Figure 1: Preferred Event Centre Site Location

The selected site for the Event Center offers significant advantages over other locations within the South District in terms of cost, schedule, economic development, and visibility. It aligns with the Downtown Master Plan vision and leverages existing infrastructure and public spaces to create a vibrant and safe environment that enhances the value of surrounding properties.

### Schematic Design

BBB Architects are making significant progress on their schematic design, which includes the blocking of program spaces and the development of preliminary floorplates. This phase is crucial as it lays the foundation for the detailed design work that will follow.

The preliminary geotechnical investigation is currently under review by the architectural team. The feedback from this review will guide the detailed geotechnical investigation in support of the foundational design.

Additionally, the BBB MEP (Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing) team is exploring various approaches to enhance the sustainability of the Event Centre design.

The project team is creating a comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan that integrates the efforts of the Cultural Hub and Downtown Master Plan projects for a holistic approach to city development. Stakeholder engagement sessions will start in March to ensure inclusivity in the project's early stages, including the design process. As part of the engagement strategy, key meetings are being planned with the Accessibility Advisory Panel, Sudbury Theatre Centre, and Indigenous communities.

## Term Sheets & Venue Operator

The City and Mr. Bidulka of KKR Advisors are continuing active negotiations with Sudbury Wolves Sports and Entertainment.

The City is also in procurement for a Venue Manager. Short listed companies will have been issued a Request for Proposal by the time this report is published. The goal is to have the Venue Operator on board by the end of March 2025. This early involvement will allow the Venue Operator to provide valuable subject matter expert input during the design stage, ensuring that the final design meets operational needs and standards.

## Financial Status

The following table provides a summary of budget and costs to date:

<b>Downtown Event Centre Budget</b>	<b>\$200,000,000</b>
<b>Costs to Date as of December 31, 2024</b>	<b>\$130,000</b>

## The London Story

In selecting the site for the new event centre, we drew upon the expertise and experience of London, Ontario. Their successful efforts in revitalizing downtown London provided valuable insights that informed our decision-making process. The ongoing success and value generated by their initiatives serve as a compelling model for our community to follow.

Budweiser Gardens opened in 2002 as a public/private partnership. It has a seating capacity of 9,090 for hockey and ice events, and over 10,000 for concerts, family shows and other events. The venue is home to the London Knights of the Ontario Hockey League and the London Lightning of the National Basketball League of Canada. The venue has had an annual attendance of 450- 750,000 since it opened.

Downtown's assessment value has more than doubled in the past 20 years, reaching \$1.96 billion in 2019. Building permit value was over \$143 million for 2018 and 2019. In 2018 and 2019, there was almost \$100 million in residential construction downtown, including 175 market rate residential apartment units and 134 affordable housing units.

Key destinations, arts and culture events, and programming continue to draw people to the downtown. Over 5.5 million people visited downtown destinations for music and cultural events in 2018 and 2019, resulting in direct support for local businesses. Music continues to grow as a major attraction for the downtown.

In March 2019, Downtown London welcomed Canada's largest cultural celebration, the JUNO Awards. JUNO Week attracted 37,000 attendees and had a \$12.5+ million economic impact. Downtown took centre stage as 4+ million people tuned into the JUNO Awards broadcast held at Budweiser Gardens. During the JUNOs, more than 100 artists performed across 17 London venues, and 309 participating artists visited London. The 2019 JUNOs produced 3.6 billion media impressions." ([State of Downtown 2019](#))

## **Next Steps**

The following is a summary of some of the key activities to be conducted in the coming months.

1. CGS staff, design team, and project partners will continue to work through the design.
2. Work with KKR Advisors to complete the negotiation of Term Sheets with the Sudbury Wolves and Sudbury Five with the aim of securing a new lease with the teams for the new building.
3. Following the successful negotiation of the Term Sheets, develop, issue, evaluate and award Request for Proposal for Venue Operator.
4. Engagement with various committees, stakeholders, and groups such as but not limited to the Accessibility Advisory Committee, Sudbury Theatre Centre.
5. Develop, issue and award Request for Pre-Qualification for Construction Manager.

## **Resources Cited**

City of London – State of the Downtown Report 2019 - [State of Downtown 2019](#)