

## **Background**

A report titled “Indoor Turf and Multi-Purpose Facilities” was presented at the April 3, 2017 Community Services Committee meeting. The report described inquiries and unsolicited proposals received from various groups about the possibility of indoor turf and multi-purpose facilities in the Greater Sudbury area.

The April 3, 2017 report acknowledged that there was no existing framework or process established for entertaining or evaluating proposals related to the partnership to deliver recreation services and facilities. The report sought direction to retain Monteith Brown Planning Consultants to develop a framework and decision process to guide decisions relating to partnering for the delivery and provision of recreation services and facilities which was approved.

On June 19, 2017 an information report titled “Framework for Partnership Opportunities for Indoor Turf and Multi-Purpose Facilities Interim Report” was presented. The report provided background information related to indoor turf and multi-purpose facilities. The report provided the following conclusions:

- The City of Greater Sudbury (City) can support an indoor turf facility with two small fields on a pitch measuring approximately 200 by 200 feet (excluding run-out space and a clubhouse building).
- Usage is greater for arenas in the Sudbury core compared to those in outlying areas (83% versus 70% in 2016/17).
- There is currently a surplus of 1.8 ice pads in the City.
- Greater Sudbury’s arenas are approaching or beyond their functional life cycle, based on industry standards.
- Any future arena construction should be in the form of replacement facilities, with consideration to multi-pad designs.

## **Clarification of Terminology**

For the purpose of this report, and accompanying report from Monteith Brown Planning Consultants titled “Indoor Turf and Multi-Purpose Facility Strategy – Draft – September, 2017” (Appendix A) the terms “partner” and “partnership” are occasionally used interchangeably with other descriptors to identify the individual or group with which the municipality may wish to create a relationship with and the general description of the relationship between the City and a third party. The terms partner or partnership are not intended to refer to the legal definition of a partner or partnership.

## **Analysis**

Monteith Brown Planning Consultants, working with the JF Group, have completed the attached Indoor Turf and Multi-Purpose Facility Strategy – Draft – September, 2017 (Appendix A). Key findings from the report are as follows:

### **Key Trends in Recreation**

### Barriers to Participation

A lack of free time due to busy lifestyles is the primary barrier to recreation participation. Organized sports are also dealing with competition from sedentary activities, spontaneous play and other sports. Affordability, or the ability to pay to play, is a significant barrier to participation in recreation.

### Impact of the Aging Population

The child and youth market are the most common users of municipal recreation facilities. As this market shrinks, it is likely to result in a reduced number of facility users. The aging population does present opportunities to make better use of facilities during non-prime hours.

### Increased Focus on Skill Development and Competition

There is a greater focus and demand on athlete development and competitive experiences. This results in more time required on the field of play and considerations for training spaces and indoor turf when facility planning.

## **Key Trends in Facility Provision**

### Implications of Aging Infrastructure

Most of Ontario's recreational infrastructure was built in the 1960's and 1970's. Older facilities present challenges in terms of lack of modern amenities, AODA deficiencies and high energy costs.

### Multi-Purpose Facilities

New construction in the form of multi-use facilities is the industry trend. Multi-purpose facilities provide one-stop shopping, opportunities for sport development and tourism and operational efficiencies.

### Green Construction

Energy efficiency and environmental sustainability are key considerations when renovating or building new recreation facilities.

## **Key Findings – Indoor Turf**

From the Indoor Turf and Multi-Purpose Facility Strategy – Draft – September, 2017 (Appendix A):

- The development of indoor turf facilities is a widespread trend across Ontario. These facilities support year-round training for competitive athletes of several sports (mainly soccer) and a variety of recreational activities.
- The City has not been directly involved in the provision or operation of an indoor turf facility and its 2014 Leisure, Parks and Open Space Master Plan Review recommended that other sectors continue to be the primary providers of these facilities. Across Canada, many facilities are operated in partnership with soccer clubs or the private sector.
- Using a participant-based methodology that considers common ratios and standards of play, the demand for indoor turf facilities (for all indoor field sport uses) in the City is currently estimated at 82 hours per week. Assuming an average weekly capacity of 60 hours per field, this translates into a current demand for 1.4 small fields (approximately 200 by 100 feet each). Fields cannot be designed as partial fields, thus this level of demand equates to two (2) small fields.
- If the facility is proposed as a permanent structure, a building that can house two small fields would be appropriate. If the facility is designed as an air-supported dome installed over an artificial turf field, a full field enclosure could be considered due to economies of scale; however, this should be explored further with the primary user groups.

### **Key Findings – Arenas**

From the Indoor Turf and Multi-Purpose Facility Strategy – Draft – September, 2017 (Appendix A):

- Aging infrastructure, changing usage patterns, expectations for modern amenities, energy efficiency and multi-use designs are causing municipalities across Ontario to rationalize their arena infrastructure and plan for the future.
- The number of minor ice sport participants in Greater Sudbury is declining – a decrease of 692 players (11%) over the past five seasons. To a lesser degree, this trend is also being experienced across the country.
- Arena usage has declined from 80% to 75% over the past four seasons. These declines have occurred equally in both prime and non-prime times, in arenas within the Sudbury core and as well as outlying areas. Demand is waning for rentals at the edges of prime time.
- Usage is consistently greater for arenas in the Sudbury core compared to those in outlying areas.
- There is a surplus of nearly two ice pads at present and this surplus is projected to persist for the next twenty years. Demand may weaken further in the short-term due to declining child and youth participation rates.
- No additional arenas are required for the foreseeable future. Arena renewal and replacement projects may be considered to extend the longevity of the existing supply. Where practical and supported by demand, multi-pad designs should be considered.

### **Key Findings – Other Multi-Purpose Facility Features**

The report also examined gymnasiums and indoor tracks, which are amenities often found in multi-purpose facilities. The report provides the following key findings:

- Future recreation facility development should consider opportunities to include a gymnasium. Gymnasium size and design should be appropriate to the scale of the facility and intended scope of services, defined in consultation with key stakeholders and potential partners.
- Indoor walking tracks should be considered in the design of new or expanded recreation facilities in Greater Sudbury. The design, massing, and complement of other activity spaces will dictate the fit of a track, as will the operating model. It is envisioned that the track would encircle an indoor turf field, gymnasium or arena, should these be elements of the facility.

### **Best Practices from Comparator Facilities**

As part of the report, indoor soccer facilities in Sault Ste. Marie, Milton, Cambridge, Guelph and Guelph/Eramosa were examined. The report provides the following summary of research from the comparator group:

- The common footprint of a facility is close to 45,000 square feet.
- Support facilities include accessible washrooms, office space, multi-purpose spaces and team change rooms.
- The report provides merits and drawbacks of permanent indoor turf structures and air-supported dome structures.
- Most municipalities indicated that facilities are operating close to maximum capacity, especially during prime hours (evenings and weekends).
- Municipalities with air-supported dome structures indicated minimal usage during summer months (May to September).
- Minimal staffing levels are required to support facility operations.

- Average rental rates are typically \$200/hour during prime time with rates decreasing by 40% to 50% during non-prime hours.
- Initial capital costs for dome facilities are estimated to be between \$3.5 and \$4.5 million (2017 dollars).
- Annual operating costs for dome facilities average approximately \$250,000.
- Most facilities operate at breakeven.
- Most municipalities operate facilities in partnership with local soccer clubs or the club is a primary tenant of the facility.

## **Relationship & Implementation Framework**

When Monteith Brown Planning Consultants were engaged, the key deliverable was to provide the City a framework and process to guide decisions relating to collaborating with third parties for the delivery and provision of recreation services and facilities.

The report outlines a framework broken down in the following sections:

### Overview

Describes the elements of successful relationships with public, not-for-profit or private entities and provides factors that should be in place when choosing to enter into a partnership and outlines potential types of arrangements.

### Guiding Principles

Addresses what is required to provide a solid foundation for a successful collaboration including the underpinnings of a solid working relationship between the City and an ally.

### Cultivating and Managing Creative Relationships

Presents frameworks and templates that can be utilized by the City in designing and implementing its partnership search and selection process as well its relationship management approach to ensure the collaboration remains as productive as possible. Tools include:

- A decision tree for direct vs. indirect service delivery.
- A four stage partnership development model.
- Detailed steps of a three stage search and selection process.
- A standardized framework for evaluation of unsolicited proposals.

The full framework is detailed in Section 5 of Appendix A.

## **Summary**

The process detailed in the report provides a standard approach for reviewing proposals and potential partners. The tools included may be customized as required depending on the size and sophistication of the project in question. The tools assist the City in determining the most appropriate relationship arrangement pertaining to a given project.

The framework and decision making process presented will increase the City's ability to effectively and efficiently evaluate the merits of potential allies and proposals, which provides protection of the interests of the municipality, potential partners and residents.

It is therefore recommended that the framework and decision processes outlined in the report received from Monteith Brown Planning Consultants be adopted by the City of Greater Sudbury and be applied to any future inquiries or initiatives involving collaboration with third parties for the delivery of recreation services and facilities.

## **Next Steps**

If approved by Council, the framework and decision processes presented will be adopted and be applied to any future inquiries or initiatives involving collaboration with third parties for the delivery of recreation services and facilities.

## **References**

Indoor Turf and Multi-Purpose Facilities Report, Community Services Committee (April 3, 2017)  
<https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=agenda&action=navigator&id=1151&itemid=12457&lang=en>

Framework for Partnership Opportunities for indoor Turf and Multi-Purpose Facilities Interim Report (June 19, 2017)  
<https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&agenda=report&itemid=3&id=1152>