



# CIVIC CENTRE UPDATE

## Civic Centre Update: Project Background

The City of Spruce Grove has been exploring opportunities to address the identified need for ice surfaces in the region for a number of years. Both the Spruce Grove Capital Plan and the Indoor Recreation Facility Strategy for the Tri-Municipal Region identified ice surfaces in the community as being deficient.

Feedback from users, the greater community, as well as through both regional and local planning exercises confirm the need for additional community ice. In addition to the importance of ice sports, community feedback has also been received regarding other cultural and recreational priorities. Based on direction from past and current City Councils, the Civic Centre focuses on addressing all the current needs, while minimizing the tax burden on existing and future residents.

In April 2021, City Administration informally updated Stony Plain and Parkland County Councils prior to making a formal presentation and business case to Spruce Grove City Council. The purpose of these presentations was to provide an update on the (at the time) arena project and to introduce the concept and business case for shifting to a Civic Centre concept. Previous work was focused on different iterations of either an events centre with community ice, a spectator arena and community ice or twin community ice facilities. These facility types would have addressed the ice needs of our region but not the other identified community and cultural needs.

The April 2021 presentations and business case provided:

- A background and summary of the work completed to date
- A summary of the new learnings and engagement overview
- A summary of updated assumptions
- A new concept of a Civic Centre including preliminary costs and next steps

The Civic Centre model was arrived at by a shift in vision to meet regional ice needs while also addressing other identified needs and aspirations for the city and the region.



Figure 1: Proposed Civic Centre aerial rendering

The design goals the City heard through engagement were incorporated into the current work on the civic centre. These include keeping costs low, address regional ice needs, do more than a basic arena but not an event centre, and meet other needs in the community and region. The Civic Centre will be able to host ice and floor events; however, event hosting is not a driver in the design, operations or financial performance of the facility. Community events, community value and meeting diverse local and regional needs are much more significant in a civic centre than in other facility options analysed.

Operational goals for the Civic Centre also aligned with these principles. Primarily, the Civic Centre would be run similar to the Agrena with a similar staffing/operating model and subsidy. Food and beverage would be contracted out, as would additional resources as required for events. Non-ice events and programming would be focused on the non-ice season to minimize disruption to ice users in order to truly reflect and address the ice needs of the region.

### **Civic Centre Update: Present State**

In early 2022, City Administration was able to advance the project to a conceptual design and design development stage. As predesign work on the Civic Centre advanced, a number of changes from the original business case were made. All changes made were in line with the design goals of keeping costs low while addressing regional recreation and culture needs. The following are the most significant changes that were made:

- Fixed seats were reduced from 1,700 to 1,400
- Construction systems were expanded to include all systems not just pre-engineered
- Cultural spaces were reduced from 25,000 to 21,000 sq. feet
- Retractable seating for the black box was set at 150 and the area was increased from 4,500 sq. feet to 7,100 sq. feet to increase multi-use capabilities
- The cost estimate was updated to a range of \$55m to \$64m

As the Civic Centre conceptual design was finalized, a facility program was set. The program for the civic centre includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Two ice sheets that meet the regional requirements for minor, junior and recreational ice sports
- Community event hosting abilities that includes both sport and non-sport events
- A community gathering hub
- A satellite library location
- A visual arts gallery and program room
- A performing arts space that can support programming as well as be used as a multi-use room

The location for the proposed civic centre is just north of Westwind Drive within the Westwind Development. The site is a 13 acre lot and can accommodate the civic centre, a transit hub/park and ride location and a 1.5 acre site that could be developed for other complementary uses. Parking on the site is being designed in an efficient manner to meet the requirement of a parking analysis while maximizing land use.



Figure 2: Proposed Civic Centre location

The proposed operating model for the Civic Centre is similar to existing Spruce Grove recreation and culture facilities. The Civic Centre will be integrated into the existing Recreation and Culture department. City staff would operate, maintain and program the facility. Excluding additional FTE's and operating grants to the Library and the Allied Arts Council, the operating deficit of the Civic Centre is anticipated to be similar to other like facilities such as the Agrena.

### **Civic Centre Update: Capital Cost Sharing**

Spruce Grove and Parkland County have a strong track record of partnering on several recreation and culture facilities that benefit the entire region, such as the TLC, Agrena, and Horizon Stage.

The Tri Municipal Regional Plan (TMRP), created jointly by the three municipalities, describes cost sharing principles related to both capital and operating expenses. The implementation of the TMRP is currently ongoing by all three municipalities. Preliminary models would suggest that potential cost share implications for Tri-Region municipalities is much higher than what is being proposed by the City for the Civic Centre project.

## **Civic Centre Update: Request of Parkland County**

Based on the above, the City is requesting consideration of \$6,000,000 towards the capital costs of the Civic Centre project. The City believes this to be a fair and reasonable request considering the overall cost of the project and benefit it will provide to Parkland County and the region. The City will also be making a formal request to Stony Plain.

The City is open to payment options such as a one-time payment or over multiple years such as two or three.

## **Civic Centre Update: Operating Estimates**

The City is currently finalizing the operating subsidy for the facility. The Spruce Grove Public Library operating expenses will increase; however, this will be considered separately as part of the annual operating grant allocation. The remaining operating subsidy (library and art gallery excluded) is estimated to be between \$500,000-\$700,000.

As mentioned, the TMRP implementation is ongoing at this time. Based on current operating cost share models and those identified in the TMRP, the estimating operating cost share request would range between \$120,000-\$160,000. For context, Parkland County has averaged approximately \$130,000 annually in operating cost share for the Agrena.

## **Civic Centre Update: Next Steps**

Currently, Spruce Grove City Council approvals for the Civic Centre are limited to land assembly and pre-design/preconstruction work. On June 13, City Council will make a final decision whether or not to proceed with the project.

If the project proceeds, further design and development of construction documents are required. If the project advances by early summer, actual construction is anticipated to begin in late summer/fall of 2022 and take a total of approximately 20 months.