

**COUNCIL MEETING**  
**COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**  
**FACILITIES DIVISION**

**REPORT CS-2025-17**  
**April 8, 2025**

**SUBJECT:**           **Arena Feasibility – Repair vs. New**

**AUTHOR:**           **Frank Pearson – Manager of Facilities, Operations and Development**

**APPROVING:**       **Jessica Ruddell – Director of Community Services**

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WELLAND receives for information report CS-2025-17 Arena Feasibility – Repair vs. New; and further

THAT Welland City Council provides feedback to staff on which option to pursue related to repairing the existing facilities versus building new.

**RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:**

This recommendation is aligned to Council’s strategic priority of ensuring “**Health and Wellbeing**” to promote personal health and well-being by offering an abundance of activities that meet the diverse needs and interests all while, advocating for improved health care throughout the city, and supporting the need for safety and security.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the benefits and constraints of repairing the existing arena facilities versus building a new facility. The Arena Feasibility Study (AFS) was commissioned to assess the need for such a facility, facility amenity needs, site selection, redevelopment options, and the preliminary financial implications of these options. This report, CS-2025-17 presents the different options for repairing versus building new along with the considerations for each option. This report seeks Council feedback on a preferred way forward and is does not include any funding approval.

**BACKGROUND:**

Following the 2022 Building Condition Assessments for the Welland Main Arena and Jack Ballantyne Memorial Arena, originally constructed in 1947 and 1967

respectively, it was indicated that both arenas are nearing their end of the effective lifecycle with Facility Condition Index scores of 9.3% and 29% respectively. Both sites require significant investment to maintain the current service levels and avoid unplanned downtime.

In June 2024, Council approved the award of RFP24-05 to CS&P Architects Inc., to complete a feasibility study exploring the current and projected demand for the facility.

CS&P held two public engagement sessions on September 25, 2024, and November 6, 2024, conducted interviews with staff and stakeholder groups and conducted market analysis and research. Through the engagement, CS&P provided analysis that the top three multi-use priorities were:

1. Gymnasium
2. Running/walking track
3. Fitness – Weights and Conditioning

Following this engagement and research analysis, CS&P provided a presentation (Appendix 1) to General Committee with recommendations, accompanying staff report CS-2025-01 on January 28, 2025 (Appendix 2), and again on February 25, 2025 for feedback. At that time, staff were looking for feedback on three key items:

1. Number of ice pads
2. Retrofit versus New Build
3. Location

Although staff received some good feedback, there was a lack of clarity around Council's preference to repair the existing facilities versus building new. This report will provide an overview of the benefits and constraints for each option as well as the financial impacts for each. Regardless of the option preferred, a comprehensive funding plan will be brought to Council for consideration. This project will require funding from other levels of government to support construction, will consider possible partnership models with the private sector, and new revenue generation opportunities.

## **DISCUSSION:**

Three options for retrofitting versus building new were explored and are presented below.

### **Option 1 – Repair and maintain the existing arena facilities**

The 2022 Building Condition Assessment called for significant investments to bring the facilities up to a state of good repair, maintaining the existing levels of service and including lifecycle replacements of equipment. This does not include any renovations or program improvements to the facility.

Description	Estimated Cost
Repair and maintain the existing arena facilities for operations for the next 10 years. Estimate based on the 2022 Building Condition Assessments (includes 6% escalation)	\$29,538,507

#### Benefits of Option 1

- Lowest capital cost in the short-term
- History of the facilities are maintained

#### Constraints of Option 1

- No ability to expand on the existing site to accommodate existing and future needs for ice and other amenities
- Does not include any renovation or program improvements, like-for-like renewal
- Higher overall cost to operate and maintain as no energy or operational efficiency gained through this approach
- Facilities continue to age even after these investments and upgrades, and additional capital investment and upgrades will be required to maintain the facilities beyond that time
- Higher risk of unplanned downtime and / or catastrophic failure
- No opportunity to create a community hub and address community needs heard through engagement with multipurpose rooms and uses, such as a gymnasium, fitness facilities, running track, and more program spaces
- Limited ability to attract tenants for revenue generation

### **Option 2 – Build a New Twin Pad Arena Facility at 501 King Street Location**

An option was reviewed to demolish both existing arenas and rebuild a new twin pad facility on the site. The proposed 98,000 sf 2-story twin pad facility would contain two NHL size rinks, change rooms, administration offices, concession, bar, and multi-purpose rooms, similar to the existing facility program. It is assumed with this approach that another twin pad could be built elsewhere in Welland, to address existing ice capacity constraints, and to add the community multi-use program components such as gymnasium, track, etc.

Description	Estimated Cost
Demolish the existing arena facilities and build a new 2-Pad arena facility at the 501 King Street location. (*See Option 3 – Phase 1 for future costs for an additional 2-Pad arena to meet future needs)	\$56,000,000

Note: This estimate includes demolition costs for the existing site.

#### Benefits of Option 2

- Lower overall operations and maintenance costs as energy and operational efficiency achieved
- Historic references can be built into new facility
- Significantly reduced risk of unplanned downtime and catastrophic failure

### Constraints of Option 2

- Parking available on the site would be reduced by 15 spaces from 178 to 163. This is considered to be undersized for a facility of this size and use
- Considerable cost inefficiency should the City wish to expand use to four pads in the city due to operating two separate facilities and therefore requiring additional staffing and duplicate infrastructure cost requirements
- Less synergy in providing community-wide enhancements and amenities reducing the ability to ensure a viable licensed restaurant, sports shop, and other commercial and clinical uses
- Limited ability to attract tenants for revenue generation operating two sites
- Demolition of the existing arenas, before building a new complementary site, could mean no arenas in Welland for multiple years, which may result in the loss of demand over time, due to market outflow

### Option 3 – Construct a New Facility at 482 River Road

An option to build a new 2-pad or 4-pad facility at the River Road site has been analyzed. This option provides ideal program synergies, and operational and staffing efficiency (i.e.. one refrigeration plant instead of two). A 4-pad leverages the scale of the building and the co-location with the Youngs Sportsplex to provide a sports campus of regional significance. The campus is located close to a major highway, shopping malls, and hotels, to maximize visitor convenience and the ability to attract tournaments and other uses. The 4-pad approach will expand user access to ice time, reduce market outflow to other centres, and assist the local economy.

### Option 3 – Phased Approach

Description	Estimated Cost
<b>Phase 1</b> – Build a new 2-Pad arena facility, located at 482 River Road, complete with a gymnasium, fitness area, track, restaurant and commercial opportunities	\$71,252,404
<b>Phase 2</b> – Build a new 2-Pad arena addition five years after the completion of Phase 1 (includes 6% escalation)	\$47,628,544
<b>Phasing Total</b>	\$118,880,948

Note: Option 3, Phase 1 includes the additional amenities as identified through community engagement. Phase 2 of this Option 3 build leverages the infrastructure of Phase 1.

### Option 3 – No Phasing, 4 pad

Description	Estimated Cost
Build a new 4-Pad arena facility, located at 482 River Road, complete with a gymnasium, fitness area, track, restaurant and commercial opportunities	\$106,859,782

### Benefits of Option #3

- Minimizes disruption to user groups as new facility could be built while existing facilities are still operating

- Ideal for program and amenity synergy and ability to attract tenants for revenue generation
- Lower overall operations and maintenance costs as energy and operational efficiency achieved
- Creates regional sports campus and shared use with Youngs Sportsplex
- Location provides numerous nearby amenities increasing the facility experience for residents and visitors
- Provides additional recreation amenities as identified through community engagement
- Significantly reduced risk of unplanned downtime and catastrophic failure
- Historic references can be built into new facility
- Ability to phase construction, if required, for an additional cost

Constraints of Option #3

- Most costly option in the short term

**FINANCIAL:**

There are no financial impacts to this report.

Regardless of the option preferred, a comprehensive funding plan will be brought to Council for consideration. This project will require funding from other levels of government to support construction, will consider possible partnership models with the private sector, and / or, new revenue generation opportunities.

**Options as detailed above**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
Option 1 – Repair and maintain the existing arena facilities	\$29,538,507
Option 2 – Build a New Twin Pad Arena Facility at 501 King Street Location	\$56,000,000
Option 3 – Construct a New Facility at 482 River Road Phased, 2 and 2	\$118,880,948
Option 3 – Construct a New Facility at 482 River Road, No Phasing, 4 pad	\$106,859,782

Note: Costs estimates for Options 2 and 3 based on figures provided by CS&P’s cost consultant and do not include potential tariffs.

**ATTACHMENT:**

Appendix 1 - CS&P Presentation – January 28, 2025

Appendix 2 – CS-2025-01 - Arena Feasibility Study - Request for Feedback