

**GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

**REPORT CS-2025-01**  
**January 28, 2025**

**SUBJECT: Arena Feasibility Study – Request for Feedback**

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

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT THE GENERAL COMMITTEE receives for information report CS-2025-01 Arena Feasibility Study – Request for Feedback.

**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:**

This report provides an overview of the preliminary findings of the Arena Feasibility Study (AFS) commissioned to assess the potential development of a new multi-use arena in the City of Welland. The study is being competed to evaluate the need for such a facility, facility amenity needs, site selection, redevelopment options, and the preliminary financial implications of these options. CS-2025-01 summarizes the work completed to date, and requests feedback from Council on three key decisions.

**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 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.

As we know, the City of Welland is growing, and demographics are changing. It is important to understand the needs of the community and to plan accordingly to provide high-quality service and recreation opportunities for all residents to enjoy. A feasibility study will provide the information needed to chart a path forward and determine the needs, size, functionality, and location of the City of Welland facility/facilities.

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.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The AFS commenced on August 14, 2024. At that time, CS&P were provided background data and information by staff to provide the local context in Welland. This background data included the Building Condition Assessments (BCA), the City's strategic plan, the Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan (PRC), growth projections, existing arena drawings, maintenance data, and facility user group rental data from the last five years.

In addition, CS&P completed community engagement with stakeholders and the public to gather feedback. Three community engagement initiatives were developed and implemented to gather information, opinions, and needs from the public. Public engagement sessions were posted on social media through 24 posts with 23,565 total impressions, 19,586 total reach and 266 total reactions (likes, comments, shares). The initiatives include:

1. An online survey, which ran from September 9-23, 2024, on the Engage Welland site, yielding 92 responses.
2. Public engagement session #1 held on September 25, 2024, to gather feedback and discuss results of the survey.
3. Public engagement session #2 held on November 6, 2024, to solicit feedback on the direction, scope, location and preliminary design developed by CS&P following the first public engagement session.

The Arena Advisory Committee was consulted in each of these community engagement initiatives. The information and feedback received through community engagement has been used to guide and develop the AFS. Some of the recurring feedback to date has provided the following information:

- Cannot focus only on hockey, need to bring in more people and support, need a new multi-use facility
- Need a training facility, weights and conditioning, track that can be used for dry land training
- Need a gym to accommodate basketball, pickleball and other games
- Accommodate accessibility provisions such as sledge hockey, basketball, para-Olympian sports

- Need community space, meeting/gathering space, food and drink, warm side viewing
- We are at capacity right now and need more ice time for other users such as girls' hockey. Simply building a twin pad will not solve our capacity issues

Top Three Multi-Use Priorities:

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

Given the feedback received to date, staff are looking for feedback from Council on three key directions:

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

Consultants CS&P architects will present their data and findings to date on each of these key directions. Staff welcome the feedback of Council to move this project forward.

#### **FINANCIAL:**

There are no financial implications to this report.

Once feedback is received on the three key directions outlined in this report, CS&P Architects will develop cost estimates for construction. Construction options will be presented including a single build or build phasing.

#### **ATTACHMENT:**

N/A