



Meeting Date: April 3, 2024

Submitted by: Michael Di Lullo, CAO and Scott Mairs, Director of Community Services

Report No: CAO-10-2024

Subject: Update on Grant Funding for Ilderton Arena and Next Steps

Recommendation:

THAT Report CAO-10-2024 re: Status Update on Grant Funding for Ilderton Arena and Next Steps be received;

AND THAT staff be authorized to proceed with the work identified in this report to make the necessary capital upgrades to the Ilderton Arena;

AND THAT Council provide pre-budget approval in the amount of \$372,730 for 2025 to fulfill the remaining budget needed to complete the project;

AND FURTHER THAT staff regularly report back on the awarding of the various project elements through the duration of the renovation.

Purpose:

To provide an update on the status of a federal grant application from Infrastructure Canada and to lay out the next steps as we proceed with the reconstruction of the Ilderton Arena.

Background:

Dating back to 2019, the Municipality has applied for three different provincial/federal grants. The first two grant requests were for a brand-new arena build with the second application focusing on energy efficiency with both submissions being unsuccessful.

In 2023, the Municipality applied for a third grant through the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings (GICB) program however with a different approach. Instead of a brand-new arena – requesting funds in excess of \$30MIL, the most recent grant was for a renovation/reconstruction with a total of up to \$4MIL focusing on key areas such as new mechanical, accessibility renovations and new lobby/entrance. The objective with this approach was to invest for the purposes of extending the lifeline of the arena for an

additional 12-15 years. Unfortunately, correspondence was recently received by Infrastructure Canada that the grant was not approved.

Over the past seven years, staff have undertaken the development of several plans and studies that support the replacement/upgrading of the Ilderton Arena. Developing each of these plans has included a community and stakeholder engagement component, such as public meetings, open houses, public surveys, focus groups and/or facilitated discussions. These plans include, but are not limited to:

- 2017 Ilderton Arena Feasibility Study
- Survey, public meetings and stakeholder meetings related to the Strategic Plan 2021-2026. This project was specifically referenced by many residents completing survey (~550) and was discussed in conversations with local service clubs and minor sports associations.
- Survey, public meetings and stakeholder meetings related to the Community Services Master Plan 2023-2027. Based on public input, this plan includes a recommendation to “Develop a long-term plan for the replacement of the Ilderton Arena.”
- Survey, public meetings and stakeholder meetings related to the Age-Friendly Community Action Plan 2022. This plan identifies access to parks, trails, community centres and arenas and access to recreation and social programs as important to the municipality’s seniors.
- Annual Budget Surveys – The need for a new arena is routinely noted by residents completing the municipality’s annual budget survey.
- Recommendations from the Middlesex Centre Community Services Advisory Committee.
- Direct engagement with Community Groups as to their needs. Groups include, but are not limited to:
 - o Ilderton Minor Hockey Association
 - o Ilderton Skating Club
 - o Ilderton Agricultural Society
 - o Ilderton Curling Club
 - o Middlesex County Library
- Middlesex County Joint Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2022-2027. This plan is developed at the County level with the support of all lower tier municipalities, under the guidance of the public Middlesex Accessibility Advisory Committee. It calls for facility projects to meet relevant legislative requirements and look for opportunities to go above and beyond as it relates to barrier-free design. It references “Ilderton Arena – Accessible Lobby Renovations” as a specific goal for Middlesex Centre.

Staff are recommending moving ahead with this reconstruction project and to budget for it accordingly.

Analysis:

The Ilderton Arena opened 52 years ago for the single purpose of providing hockey and skating. The goal of this project is to extend the life of the facility for another 10-12 years, achieve a higher level of accessibility that will meet the needs identified in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), improve energy efficiency, and provide a higher level of service for both participants and spectators.

Ilderton is a growing community and requires additional civic and public spaces now and into the future. As a region, the Middlesex Census Division, which includes the City of London, Ilderton is expected to see the following between 2019 and 2046:

- Over 30% population growth
- 70% to 100% growth in the number of seniors
- 25% growth in the number of children ages 0-14

(Source: Ontario Population Projections Update, 2019–2046)

As Council is aware, Middlesex Centre is one of the fastest growing communities in southwestern Ontario. Over the next ten to fifteen years, our population is expected to grow to upwards of 35,000 residents. As our municipality grows, so does the need to provide a greater array of amenities and programs. Renovating the existing space will allow us to offer more choice in programming to remain a community where people can live, work and play.

As referenced in our Strategic Plan, our objective is to create an Engaged Community. This priority is expanded on in our Community Services Master Plan, which sets out goals for active living and for inclusion and access. One of the ways we are achieving these goals is by supporting our community and minor sport organizations, and creating safe, accessible spaces for them to bring people together. As in many rural communities, the Ilderton Arena acts as the central hub for social and recreational programs delivered by both the municipality and our community partners. Currently these partners include local minor sports associations, local service clubs, the Ilderton Agricultural Society, the Ilderton Curling Club, the Boys and Girls Club, and the Middlesex County Library. For example, the Ilderton Agricultural Society, minor sports, and local service clubs frequently host meetings, tournaments, and events at the arena. The arena grounds are also home to the annual Ilderton Fall Fair which sees over 15,000 visitors. Renovating the arena facility will address the needs of these partners to grow as our community grows. It will offer a shared, accessible space that will enable these groups to expand and advance their own program offerings to serve our changing community demographics, providing local recreational opportunities to underserved groups including youth, seniors, and those living with disabilities. The renovated facility will highlight how the municipality can partner and enable other groups to achieve our shared goals of greater service offerings.

The current Ilderton Arena is aging and, at a minimum, needs updates to bring the facility up to today's building standards (e.g., sustainability, accessibility, fire, safety, etc.). The current 52-year-old facility is limited in scope and size and does not afford the opportunity to expand nor enable the municipality to provide for more services and programming. The 2017 Ilderton Indoor Recreational Needs Study indicates that the municipality will be in a position to support a twin pad facility by 2034 based on Census data and projections. Renovating the facility now allows the municipality to increase its service level while meeting current building code standards. Renovating will also allow the facility to continue operating for another 10-12 years, at which time the municipality will look to replace the facility with a twin pad facility.

The project is broken down into the following four categories.

Category 1 – Upgrades to the Refrigeration Plant & Electrical

The proposed retrofit calls for upgrades to the refrigeration plant to achieve significant utility reductions while also accounting for the recovery of waste heat to further provide free heating to both domestic hot water and public spaces. The heat recovery would lessen the load on the cooling tower while heating the dressing rooms and lobby area. Upgrading the refrigeration plant and its equipment will prolong the life of the facility and ensure ice operations can be maintained efficiently and effectively for the next 10-12 years while also remaining legislatively compliant with the Technical Standards & Safety Authority (TSSA). The construction of a vestibule outside of the refrigeration plant room will need to be constructed as part of the TSSA compliance. Many of the existing electrical services are original to the building and are recommended to be replaced.

Category 2 – Improved Player Safety

To improve safety within the Ilderton Arena, the proposed retrofit calls for replacing the existing dasher board and glass system with new. The new rink board/glass system will have taller rink glass that will enhance the environmental friendliness and safety of the ice surface for spectators and participants. Currently the rink boards are over 30 years old and are built with a steel frame and plywood covering, with no give or flexibility when participants run into the boards. The new rink boards will be an aluminum framed system with high density plastic covering. This type of rink board system will allow for some 'give' when participants hit the boards. Taller shielding (rink glass) will also be installed to provide additional safety to participants by keeping pucks within the playing area of the rink. In conjunction with spectator netting this will ensure that all spectators are safe from pucks that may leave the playing surface.

Category 3 – Upgrade Spectator Area

The proposed retrofit will also focus on improvements to the spectator area of the facility. Work to include the installation of radiant tube heaters along the entire bleacher length, upgraded spectator benches, beam painting, extension of the 'Low Emissivity Ceiling,' installation of bleacher railings and a full rink paint refresh.

Category 4 – Renovated Lobby, Dressing Rooms, and Improved Accessibility

The proposed retrofit calls for some significant upgrades to better accessibility for all users of the facility. The following enhancements are identified to be made:

- Renovations to the lobby and viewing area;
- New entrance vestibule with sliding doors;
- New universal washroom;
- New men's and ladies' washrooms with accessible enhancements installed in each washroom; and
- Renovation to existing dressing rooms

As part of the Accessibility Audit performed by Sawchuk Accessible Solutions and Cornerstone Architects in 2023, the entrance and washroom improvements would meet the gold standard if being scored by the Rick Hansen Foundation certification for accessibility. All these changes will strive to remove barriers for people with disabilities allowing all people to enjoy their time spent at the Ilderton Arena either as a spectator or participant. It is worth noting that not only will the improved accessible enhancements benefit the winter ice sport users of the facility, but will also serve to improve the experience for all the summer and special events that the Ilderton Arena plays host to such as the Annual Fall Fair, numerous fund-raising events hosted by local service clubs, and the Boys and Girls club summer camp that runs in July and August.

Project Timeline

Preparation for this project will commence (pending Council approval) in April 2024. Staff will procure the various components of the project and will bring back any necessary reports to approve spending.

The Municipality will be leading this reconstruction project and will function as the General Contractor, overseeing all project categories identified above. The project timeline for completion is as followed:

April 2024: Issue RFP for Architectural/Engineering.

May-August 2024: Detailed design for lobby/dressing rooms along with work that can be completed this summer.

August 2024 to March 2025: Procurement of labour/materials.

April 2025: Construction Begins.

August 2025: Substantial Completion.

Financial Implications:

The total project budget has been identified at **\$4,000,000**

Category 1 – Upgrades to Refrigeration Plant & Electrical	\$1,300,000
Category 2 – Improved Player Safety	\$385,200
Category 3 – Upgrade Spectator Area	\$154,800
Category 4 – Renovated Lobby, Dressing Rooms & Accessibility	\$2,000,000
<u>Architectural (based at 8% of Category 4 project costs)</u>	<u>\$160,000</u>
Total Costs	\$4,000,000

In the 2024 approved capital budget, \$3,627,270 had been identified to complete the work as part of the GICB grant. Staff are requesting that these funds be utilized to complete the above noted work and that Council provides a pre-budget approval of \$372,730 to fulfill the budget requirement that is to be spent in 2025.

The project is to be funded from the Buildings and Facilities Reserve Fund.

Strategic Plan:

This matter aligns with following strategic priorities:

- Responsive Government - Objective 5.3 – Foster a culture of innovation, continuous improvement, and cost-effective service delivery
 - By sharing information and gathering input, continuing our timely and effective communication to the public.
 - By reviewing and enhancing our processes
- Sustainable Infrastructure and Services - Objective 4.3 – Continue with our asset management plan and apply a financial sustainability lens to all municipal assets and infrastructure
 - By progressively updating our asset management plan and building the reserve funds for the timely repair/replacement of our assets, and expanding our current practice of making annual reserve fund contributions toward the cost of projected asset management expenditures
 - By communicating our approach to capital projects and communicating clearly with the public on capital spending priorities in terms of costs, benefits, funding sources and timing.

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Correspondence from Ministry of Infrastructure