

Memorial Fieldhouse scores big with sports groups

(Penticton, BC – June 1, 2018) – An early concept of the Memorial Fieldhouse was well received by attendees at two drop-in sessions held this week. Over 200 people representing lacrosse, tennis, pickleball, roller derby as well as the community-at-large attended the drop-in sessions on May 29 and 30 to preview the concept and share their feedback. “It was encouraging to see a strong turnout and hear positive feedback from some of the people that would ultimately use the facility,” says JoAnne Kleb, Engagement Strategist.

The plan for the Memorial Fieldhouse was developed as part of the City’s work to build the business case for the vision for Penticton’s arenas endorsed by Council last July. The vision proposes constructing a new twin surface, multi-use arena at the SOEC, converting Memorial Arena to a fieldhouse, and eventually decommissioning McLaren Arena. The concept will provide the details needed to develop an estimated cost for the conversion of Memorial Arena.

“Unfortunately, having ice in Memorial Arena is affecting the structure of the building and its systems,” says Bregje Kozak, Recreation and Facilities Director. “By removing the ice and converting the building to a fieldhouse, we have an opportunity to extend the life of this historic building and meet a need for more indoor sport surfaces.”

Some of the key changes to Memorial Arena proposed in the concept include:

- the change rooms and Zamboni room would be removed and replaced with entrances to the building
- the bleachers would be removed to expand the court surface to accommodate a variety of sports and court configurations
- the track on the second level would remain for walking and viewing
- a multi-use surface would be installed and would feature an LED lighting system to mark the lines of the court for the sport being played

While most attendees supported the concept and the proposed LED sport surface, some attendees expressed concern about costs and parking. “The business case we are working on will provide residents with the details they need to properly consider this project,” says Kozak. “It will include the costs to build and operate the facilities as well as provide a plan for parking.” A parking study is currently underway to collect data to inform the parking plan as well as address immediate needs at the SOEC site.

With the feedback gathered during the drop-in sessions, the concept will be refined in order to prepare the estimate for the work. The drawings are now available on shapeyourcitypenticton.ca for everyone to view and provide feedback before June 15. The business case is expected to be completed later this fall in time to make a decision before March 2019 when the City is required to confirm its plans in order to receive the \$6 million grant for the project awarded to the City by the federal government.

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