



SUBJECT: Orchard Community Hub

TO: Environment, Infrastructure & Community Services Cttee.

FROM: Recreation, Community and Culture Department

Report Number: RCC-03-21

Wards Affected: 5

File Numbers: 955-01

Date to Committee: April 8, 2021

Date to Council: April 20, 2021

Recommendation:

Authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign the necessary agreements prepared to the satisfaction of the Executive Director of Legal Services and Corporation Counsel, Director of Recreation, Community and Culture and Chief Financial Officer for the renovation of two classrooms at St. Christopher Catholic Elementary School to provide community space.

PURPOSE:

Vision to Focus Alignment:

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's authorization to sign the necessary agreements with the Halton Catholic District School Board to renovate and subsequently operate and program community space within a school facility. This initiative supports the following strategic directions:

- Support sustainable infrastructure and a resilient environment
- Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture

Background and Discussion:

In the summer of 2017 residents from the Orchard community expressed concerns about youth behavior in their neighbourhood. As a result, staff, the ward councilor and concerned residents met to talk about a community engagement plan to address the

concerns. After two community meetings residents identified the need for a youth meeting or gathering space. The closest City community centres to this community are Tansley Woods and Haber. Parents indicated that they were reluctant to allow their children to walk a significant distance to these community centres on their own and therefore requested an alternative meeting or gathering space within the Orchard community.

After that meeting staff received the following staff direction SD-4-18:

Direct the Director of Parks and Recreation to contact the Halton Catholic School Board to discuss the opportunity to provide community space at Corpus Christi High School through a community partnership and report back during 2018 on the feasibility and potential cost for consideration in the 2019 budget process.

Staff initiated discussions with staff from the Halton Catholic District School Board (Board) to determine if there was surplus school space at Corpus Christi Catholic Secondary School. Board staff reviewed school locations in the Orchard community and identified surplus classroom space in elementary schools only. After further discussion it was determined that St. Christopher Catholic Elementary School (St. Christopher), located at 2400 Sutton Drive, was the best option for the City to renovate two classrooms for community space.

Discussions with the Board continued, and funds were included in the 2020 and 2021 capital budgets as indicated below in Financial Matters. For the City to renovate, operate and program the community space at St. Christopher, the parties will initially enter into a Letter of Intent that outlines the general parameters, scope and timelines for the project. The parties will then negotiate both a construction and license agreement to ensure a clear understanding of responsibilities, term, costs, etc.

The total size of the two classrooms is 1,470 square feet. The intent is to make the two classrooms one larger room that will be secured from the rest of the school with a new exterior access. The space will include its own accessible washroom, cupboards with countertops and sinks, an open area and other interior design improvements to accommodate programs and activities.

It is anticipated programs in this space will be for all ages for programming opportunities that may include, after school drop in, parent and tot, gathering space, arts and crafts, games and cards, meetings, video games, movie nights, meditation, yoga, etc. The City will have access to the area seven days a week between the hours of 7 a.m. and 11 p.m. on a year-round basis.

The parties were anticipating the renovation of the two classrooms would take place in the summer of 2021 but with the impacts of COVID the construction is now scheduled to occur in the summer of 2022. Use of the space will commence in the fall of 2022.

Staff recently started reviewing the details of the agreements that need to be in place for this project. Prior to issuing a request for proposal for the design of the space staff want to have a letter of intent in place with the Board. Following this, the parties will begin discussions on the construction and license agreement that are anticipated to be in place in the fall of 2021.

Strategy/process

Residents in the Orchard community identified a need for more access to community space. Staff understood the resident's concerns and developing an arrangement with the Board for exclusive use of space in a school was a cost-effective way to create community space.

Having secured capital funds for design and construction of the Orchard Hub, staff now need to negotiate:

- A letter of intent to ensure both parties are on the same page prior to initiating the design process
- A construction agreement and
- A license agreement

To execute all of the above agreements staff requires Council's authorization to sign.

Options Considered

Staff did look to see if there was an opportunity to develop a City facility in the Orchard but as this community is built out and limited green space staff thought it would be best to look for other partners in the neighbourhood that might have publicly accessible space that residents could access. Both the Halton Catholic and Halton Public School boards were consulted as well as Halton Waldorf School which operates in the neighbourhood.

Financial Matters:

\$50,000 was approved in the 2020 capital budget to engage the services of a consultant for the design of the space.

\$300,000 was approved in the 2021 capital budget to fund the renovation of two classrooms.

Staff estimate the annual lease payment to the Board will be approximately \$12,000.

Annual operating costs are estimated to be \$74,800

Total Financial Impact

The City will incur operating costs for the community space starting in the fall of 2022.

Source of Funding

Funding for the design and renovation of the community space has been approved in the 2020 and 2021 capital budget.

Staff will include operating costs in the 2022 operating budget.

Other Resource Impacts

Staff will negotiate with the board on cleaning contracts and maintenance. At this time the anticipated staffing requirements will amount to 0.8 FTE for operation staff. Staff will be working with the community on the programming and program delivery in the space, ideally making this a community hub that is programmed by residents to residents. If the City is to offer direct programming, there will be the need for additional program staff which will be presented through the operating budget such that need materializes.

Climate Implications

By using an existing facility within the community limits the need to encroach on green spaces and is an effective use of public lands. The school board has identified the classrooms as surplus space, and this is a great opportunity to limit the built form footprint in the Orchard.

Engagement Matters:

Residents in the Orchard community expressed a need for community space to the Ward Councilor and staff.

Staff held two community engagement meetings in the fall of 2017 that lead to discussions with the Board and this Orchard Hub opportunity at St. Christopher's.

The need for Community space continues to be identified as the Mohawk Leadership Project Team for, "Beyond Your Front Door," experiences in 2018 and the needs continues to be advocated for by the Orchard Community Resident Association (OCRA.)

Conclusion:

Providing spaces for community members to meet and interact is an important step in developing neighbourhoods. Through a collaborative approach with the Board, the City will create space in an existing facility that the community can access.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Pladsen

Community Development Planner

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Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.