



SUBJECT: Robert Bateman Community Centre community engagement sessions and outline next steps

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Recreation, Community and Culture

Report Number: RCC-01-24

Wards Affected: all

Date to Committee: February 5, 2024

Date to Council: February 13, 2024

Recommendation:

Direct the Director of Recreation, Community and Culture to explore opportunities for dedicated exclusive use space for: arts and culture, skills trade, social services and science and technology programming at Robert Bateman Community Centre (RBCC), while ensuring space and opportunity for open social spaces gathering; and

Report back to Committee of the Whole by September 2024 as outlined in recreation, community and culture department report RCC-01-24.

PURPOSE:

- Share the feedback that staff heard from the community on their vision for the uses of the space at Robert Bateman Community Centre in phase two of the construction project.
- Share the feedback that staff heard from the business sector on the exclusive use interest at Robert Bateman Community Centre.
- To provide current status of community room use at Recreation Centres; and
- Ask Committee to provide direction on the ideal uses that they would like staff to explore for Robert Bateman Community Centre and areas that they would not like staff to explore.

Vision to Focus Alignment:

- Increase economic prosperity and community responsive city growth
- Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture

Background and Discussion:

In June 2023 report RCC-10-23 Former Robert Bateman High School – Communication and Engagement Update was tabled at committee. That report directed:

the Director of Corporate Communications and Engagement and the Director of Recreation, Community and Culture to execute the communications and engagement tactics included in Report RCC-10-23, Appendix A.

Also noted in RCC-10-23 was the engagement decision statement, which is:

The Design of the facility will be influenced by the outcome of the community visioning exercises, the PRCAMP, (now Live and Play Plan), Direct Delivery Review and Request for Expressions of Interest. The use of space and program mix will be determined by Recreation, Community and Culture staff using the Recreation Framework and will be reflective of city-wide recreational facilities and service delivery.

After Council approved RCC-10-23, staff have been actively engaging with the community on:

- The Live and Play Plan as outlined in RCC-23-23.
- The Direct Delivery Review, on [Get Involved Burlington](#); and
- The visioning for Robert Bateman Community Centre.

In addition, staff also launched the request for expressions of interest for exclusive space use at Bateman Community Centre through [Get Involved, Burlington](#).

Specific to the Bateman project staff

- Lead five community meetings both in person and online from August to October 2023,
- Attended Food for Feedback and Appleby Line Street Festival to gather broad community interest; and
- Provided a portal for additional feedback on [Get Involved Burlington](#) for those that were not able to attend any of the other engagement sessions (all this detail is provided in Appendix A); and
- Staff hired a graphic facilitator to capture the community feedback. (See Appendix A).

Staff also launched a Request for Expression of Interest (RFEI) process to see what business (for profit and not for profit) or services would like to lease exclusive space in

the Robert Bateman Community Centre. 139 people visited the Get Involved Burlington to view the opportunity and out of those; 73 people submitted responses.

Consistent themes emerged through all the engagements, for Live and Play, Direct Delivery and Bateman, these are noted in the table below.

Arts and Culture	<p>Dedicated and rental spaces for arts creation.</p> <p>A local level black box studio for rehearsals, recitals, performances, and displays aimed to attract aspiring and amateur artists to be affordable for them to share their craft with the community.</p>
Day Care	Licensed Day Care centre.
Food	<p>Lots of interest in having food service provided as a way to bring people together, very similar to how the Bistro is the social hub at the Burlington Senior Centre.</p> <p>Use the food operation as a training opportunity for food handling and preparation and create a social enterprise business.</p>
Offices	Dedicated space for sport organizations, social service organizations, professionals (dentist, physio therapist, etc.).
Science and Technology development	Dedicated space for computers, 3D printers, coding, etc.
Skills Trade Development	<p>Dedicated use of the existing shops for skills trade development for neuro divergent people.</p> <p>Dedicated space for woodworking hobbyist.</p> <p>Dedicated space for radio control.</p>
Social Services Space	Dedicated and rental spaces for social support programs for various marginalized communities.
Social Spaces	<p>Open space that is flexible and can accommodate various recreational interests from playing cards, to gaming, to music lessons, to yoga, etc.</p> <p>An open space just to hang out and learn from each other with food being a key element to bring people together. This kind of space has been referred to as the third space or as staff prefer; a location that is a social anchor.</p>

The one area that the community is passionate about was around social spaces. Spaces and places that are flexible and adaptable to meet a wide range of activities. Staff did hear the need for a senior centre, and a youth centre but as the community discussed these concepts, they realized that a dedicated space is not needed especially when the timing of use of the space may be better met through a community space. There was also a lot of discussion about removing designation and segregation by age and the community felt that the City should be looking to create spaces where all people can congregate, mix, and learn from each other, breaking down social barriers.

Although the community is looking for spaces and places like this, staff have seen a limited use of multipurpose spaces in existing facilities. The approved Live and Play background and community engagement report, RCC-23-23, outlined that the current facility utilization rates of multipurpose space is 13-16% pre-pandemic, while other facility assets like arenas, pools and gyms have a range of 60-80% plus capacity utilization rate.

That being said and given the strong sense and eagerness from the community for these social spaces, staff will be piloting this concept at Tansley Woods over the next two years to assess the utilization of such spaces by the community. This will allow staff to explore and meet this community need now instead of waiting until at the earliest 2027. In addition, RCC will be actively working with the community to use these under-utilized spaces and looking to develop a framework keeping the goals of feasibility and utilization in mind. Like the community hubs, if the facility is open and the community would like to gather, share and recreate then no charge will be applied to use the space. If members of Committee know of such organizations, groups or individuals looking to use City space for free please connect them with Community Development staff through communitysupport@burlington.ca.

Staff also heard the need for exclusive gym space for pickleball, Patel, tape ball, badminton, futsal, gymnastics, and traditional gym sports. Unfortunately, exclusive gym space for any of these groups is not feasible at RBCC because of the lease agreement with Brock University which stipulates that they can access the gyms for student use. The community will be able to access the triple gym space on an hourly rental basis through the [traditional space allocation process](#).

Lastly and for clarity purposes, staff also could not consider the four second floor meeting room spaces for exclusive use due to agreement terms with Brock University, where within the first five years of operation, Brock University can expand its use into any of those spaces. To prevent the City from having to remove a lease, staff will look to permit hourly or seasonal renters on this floor.

In conclusion, the spaces that are in scope include: three former shop areas and 11,000 square foot space for the community and the City to determine the ideal use.

Strategy/process/risk

As outlined in the previous Bateman Engagement Report, RCC-10-23, staff will now go back out to the community to match the community vision with the people who can fulfill that vision for the three shops and the 11,000 square foot space. Staff will share with the community the themes received from the RFEI process and ask the community to prioritize these activities/uses to best meet the needs of residents today and tomorrow.

It is through this consultation that we will determine the design requirements for phase 2 of the project to allow staff to gather costing estimates and design requirements for use to impact the capital budget request for 2025 and beyond. This will also help staff to develop the simulated operating budget for the facility.

There may be some activities/uses that Council may not want the community to explore such as various lines of businesses that may not be a fit for this amenity. Should this be the case; staff suggest issuing a staff direction to remove those items as areas of consideration for community consultation.

Upon approval of this report, staff will launch a prioritization exercise both online and in person to solidify community use and activities at RBCC.

Timing is also lending itself well such that staff can also start the outdoor engagement process. As outlined in report EICS-06-24 staff received approval for the parking reduction at RBCC, however, with the track removal, there is a need to redesign the outdoor spaces around the community centre. There are two areas for the outdoor space:

1. Property directly behind RBCC which is City land; and
2. Property east of RBCC behind Ascension elementary school; these lands are owned by the Halton District Catholic School Board of Education.

The space behind RBCC will primarily be used for passive recreational use because the field will be a geothermal bore field, which limits the ability to have any larger sports field, splash pad or other recreational amenity that required underground serving. The community will be able to influence the walking path flow and connectivity, benches, and tree placements.

The lands east of RBCC owned by the Catholic School Board involves staff working very closely with the Catholic Board and the Ascension school community, Board staff, the school parent council, and the Board of Trustees on potential designs for the space.

Once there is comfort with two to three outdoor designs from the school community, staff will take the concepts out to the community for a vote on their preferred concept.

All of this consultation on the outdoor space will be happening in the late spring of 2024 for anticipated construction between now and 2027.

Options Considered

At this time, Committee could direct staff to not proceed with an exclusive use and leave the space as an open opportunity for residents and businesses to use on a rental basis. At this time, any restricted spaces due to agreement such as gyms, and the rooms on the second floor will operate on this model of rentals only. However, due to the community vision results valuing activities like woodworking, skills training, and visual arts creation that are not City-delivered programs; it would be best to fill this need through exclusive use.

Committee could also decide to provide some further direction on which kinds of exclusive uses is preferred to provide structure to the vision for the next phase of engagement. If there are certain lines of business/programming that Committee would not like to pursue, guiding staff and the community at this stage would be very helpful.

Financial Matters:

Total Financial Impact

Of the \$100,000 budgeted for community engagement for the Robert Bateman Community Centre, staff have spent just over \$17,000. The remaining budget will be utilized for upcoming engagement activities.

Source of Funding

Funding for engagement is being provided through the Robert Bateman Capital Project Budget.

Other Resource Impacts

Working with the community and several interested parties involves a number of staff from various departments across the corporation. Staff from Corporate Communications and Engagement are key to making sure that the community is aware of the engagement opportunities and support the various engagement tactics that Recreation, Community and Culture (RCC) is using to consult with the community.

Staff from Environment, Infrastructure and Community Services (EICS), Procurement and Legal have also supported the process and background work needed to guide and support RCC staff to ensure that there is a fair and open process.

Climate Implications:

Not applicable for the engagements but as staff engage on outdoor spaces at RBCC, the impact of warmer, wetter, and wilder weather will be top of mind as staff engage with the community. In addition, the Facility is being designed to be net carbon neutral through building upgrades as part of Phase 1 construction and implementation of geothermal as part of future phases.

Engagement Matters:

As noted above there has been extensive community engagement for this project. Staff have gathered great ideas from the community, business and not for profit sector. There are some overlapping themes between community desires and business interest.

The next phase for the indoor engagement is to reach back out to the community to help prioritize the potential service providers and programs to be located out of the former high school location. At the same time, staff will start the outdoor engagement for the property located directly behind the RBCC and will be working closely with the Catholic School Board and the Ascension school community to come up with two or three design options for the HDCSB land that the community can vote on.

Conclusion:

The community is excited about the future opportunities at Robert Bateman Community Centre; residents, small businesses and not for profits alike. There were some common themes between what the community's vision for the space is and the businesses and not for profit wanting to offer the programs and services that the community is looking for. Staff are excited to work with the community and the business/service sector to determine the priorities to meet the community's needs.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendices:

- A. Community visioning engagement comments and graphic facilitation
- B. Summary of the Expressions of Interest

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.