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Executive Summary

Overview

The Sport and Recreational Plan is a strategic document that will help lead the way to provision of recreation for Cambridge. This document will also help in notifying that Cambridge is a seemingly growing city and it is time to help modify and adapt to its fast-changing society.

A vision for the recreational facilities in Cambridge

Demolish our oldest recreational facilities and replace them with new but different ones. Also find new ways to bring our community back to in-person recreational activities after COVID-19's effect is dying down.

My proposal ideas:

- Demolish: Dickson Center, Karl Homuth Arena & Duncan McIntosh Arena
- Renovate the Cambridge Sports Park facility
- Build a 50m pool in replacement of Karl Homuth Arena
- Build an indoor soccer dome in replacement of Duncan McIntosh Arena
- Turn Dickson Center into a government owned facility
- Fund a new recreational facility
- Bring the Grand River Transits's ION Light Rails to Cambridge

How can we do this?

With COVID-19 having a relatively smaller impact on our community due to an updated restrictions lifting mask mandates, it brings an opening to take action before another possible threat gets in the way. Precautions will still be recommended and accepted in our community as it is the number one priority to stay safe, but with the changes it can bring more events to the city. Finding ways to stay creative and innovative in ensuring residents to stay active during these tough times were indeed difficult, but now seemingly enough we can attempt to move past it and bring back our social connections. But how can we do that? Building new facilities will bring up a fresh start for our community after seeing everything fall apart during COVID. With everything being new, this is good enough to bring everyone back and bringing back our yearly events like the Tour de Grand will help grow our community again.

Introduction

What is the city of Cambridge?

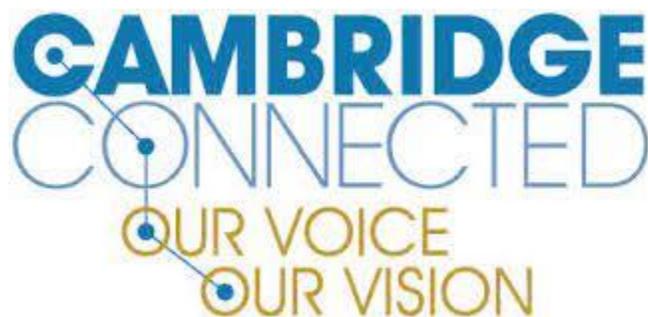
Four former communities came to form the city of Cambridge back in 1973. They are known as Galt, Hespeler, Preston and Blair. The city's vision is: "a place for people to prosper alive within a community". Now with its historic architectural culture, the city of Cambridge provides four spectacular values: **Integrity**, **Respect**, **Inclusiveness** and **Service**. These values bring the community together as a whole and sets a tone for visitors when they enter the city.

What can they provide?

The city of Cambridge provides a broad range of municipal services for its residents varying from several recreational programs, facilities, parks, forestry and special events. With 58km worth of walking trails, some downtown on its waterfront, Cambridge provides beautiful sites like the Butterfly Conservatory, Cambridge Mill, Langdon Hall and many more!

Our Voice, Our Vision

Our voice, our vision has been a strategic plan that began back in 2015, its idea is to receive input from the people on future recreational projects. These possibilities are what keep Cambridge as a whole as a community, giving the people the chance to express their thoughts. With the last 2 years of COVID's impact winding down, it has become a common discussion in the city as to what needs to be changed. So in this strategic plan, we will never forget to include the voice of the people as it is our community and that's what's keeping Cambridge together.



Background/ Purpose

Location

Located in southern Ontario, Cambridge CY (CSD) is one of the three cities that make up Waterloo Region. Divided into its 4 sections, it is a thriving and recently improved city with many more projects up ahead. Recently, two new apartment buildings almost completing construction were installed in the center of Galt next to it's also very new Hamilton Family Theatre. Just two years before, two more apartment buildings were installed next to the highly rated Cambridge Mill Restaurant. This shows that the city is renovating several buildings especially in downtown Galt, making it a perfect time to make some changes to our recreational facilities as well!

Stakeholders

Internal stakeholders are:

- City of Cambridge
- City staff/ employees
- Administrators
- Schools
- Sports teams/ programs

External stakeholders are:

- Sports Organizations ex: CMHA/ CMBHA
- Ontario Government
- Waterloo Region services

Socio-political climate

Rare is one of the many organizations in the Region that we have that fights global warming. The organization protects 1200 acres of land preserving the environment, giving Cambridge another factor in its efforts to maintain a sustainable living. We also have several YMCA's in the city and separate programs for divided groups. Factors among participation in recreation for youth have always been controversial especially in gender, so programs are made to teach lessons, provide comfortable spaces, having a field to yourself that is rented etc. The Cambridge Skating Club is a program with its separate sections for girls only, beginners, both genders etc. These programs and options that Cambridge offers can only increase with the bigger facilities.

Proposed Planning Methods

Who would I seek to gather information from?

- Cambridge Residents
- Schools
- City of Cambridge Board
- Waterloo Region Board

How?

- Surveys/ Questionnaires
- Workshops/ Meetings
- Interviews
- Formal/ Official Consultations

How would I go assessing the objectives/ aspirations of stakeholders

- Determine the top priorities
- Examine how to make their needs a realistic possibility
- Find out resources, locations, time etc.
- Seek approval from Waterloo Region Board + City of Cambridge
- Start planning construction

Methods:

The easiest method to receive information from the people is through surveys. Strengths for survey research is how relatively cost effective it is. Standardization also plays a role in receiving answers to questions that should have similar answers developing more actions that need to be taken place. But potential weaknesses in that case is that the questions have to be basic and the issue of validity. So bringing interviews and meetings into play with higher power brings more valid responses. The next best option is Interviewing, however it is very time consuming but can generate more honest and deeper information than a multiple choice question. Emails, polls on social media, websites, and focus groups also play a key role in being very beneficial with little weaknesses. There are also methods to ask people to take action by using their voice through social media, podcasts, signs etc. But if the board were to disagree about a recreational expansion, protests can come into play as well.

Demographic Research

The 2021 Census Profile does not include population by age yet so the information was compared through 2011 and 2016's Census Profiles:

Table showing the only significant amount of growth in these years (both genders):

	2011	2016
55 to 59 years	7,955	9,040
60 to 64 years	6,725	7,520
65 to 69 years	4,775	6,320
70 to 74 years	3,600	4,440
75 to 79 years	2,800	3,230
80 to 84 years	2,080	2,415
85 years and over	2,105	2,495

Alternate provision may be necessary for these ages, however in recreation it can never do no harm to provide more programs for seniors interested in physical activity, especially at the YMCA. The population for these years collected together grew 1.2% but it is outdated information. We do know that in 2021, the population grew at a shocking 6.6% gaining around 9000 new residents but it is unclear of what age. But from 2011-2016, apart from that chart of growth, we didn't see very many differences except a 1% decline in population for ages 15-19. This is a key age group especially for sport so building a new recreational facility will drive families to the area with kids ready to play. Under the assumption that this 6.6% is an important factor, it's always good to brainstorm potential ways to improve recreation exposure.

New/ growing cultural groups in the community:

There isn't a whole lot of change, numbers for the Aboriginal Peoples did grow 0.97% from 2011 to 2016, but I wouldn't say it's enough to make any huge changes. There still isn't much data to compare from in that regard, having the status of cultural groups in the 2011 census being very limited.

Extra Data:

- There are 6,735 single parents
- 4,750 lone householders
- 14,160 people renting housing
- 41,848 residents have one/ no cars

A big opportunity for residents with one/ no cars is to request from Waterloo Region to receive Grand River Transit's new ION Light Rails (cable cars) in downtown Cambridge. It does feel unfair to Cambridge's residents to help pay for it but not receive any of the new public transportation. Bringing these cable cars to the Galt Arena Gardens would help the facility grow in value, as well as a new recreational facility bringing more people to town. Providing public transport is always important and the city buses aren't enough.

Socio-economic groups that need special attention:

- Travel (23,235 residents travel 15-30 minutes to work, more than the 18,000 for less than 15 minutes) Issue is lack of public transportation
- 4500 Unemployed residents
- 22,445 residents have no post-secondary certificate

Socio-economic groups that can be left to their own devices and resources:

- Education (104,030)
- Health Standards (6,760)
- 7,135 residents speak both English and French

How does the distribution of population match the distribution of leisure?

With an on-going increase in overall population, the amount of leisure and recreational programs/ services offered are far more limited. Actions are needed since the population grew 6.6% meanwhile our programs/services & facilities have not changed. There are geographic areas with no provision being West Galt. Its closest facility is Dickson Center but is mainly open for beer league/ tyke hockey. Its small size makes it not a point of interest for teens and older making it a 15 minute drive to the next closest arena.

Sport and Recreation Provision Inventory

The Provision Inventory in Cambridge is very limited, you either participate in sports organized, few programs, or on your own. Most recreation programs and services are in the summer, biking, skateboarding, political movements, volunteering opportunities and swimming. At Galt Arena there is a Cambridge Skating Club as well as a Hespeler Skating Club in another facility, but it remains those two options. Due to the amount of locations as well, it is very small. Speaking from experience, I would drive to Kitchener for some Hockey programs and Biking facilities especially the Iron Horse Trail. This is another hole that can be filled with new developments to our aging facilities. Upgrading our facilities is the least we can do. At Duncan McIntosh, we have 6 soccer fields, but the closest indoor soccer dome is 30 minutes away outside the city. The park is called Churchill and it's very close to the center of the city so adding a soccer dome in this location would be ideal over a small aging hockey arena. They decided to expand to an indoor skatepark next door, however they never ended up doing anything more than building it, it's just been an empty room. Sometimes used for conventions and award ceremonies, taking that down as well would leave plenty of room for a soccer field without removing any parking. If anything, 6 outdoor soccer fields in this area is an excessive amount of provision, but with 3 baseball diamonds there as well, it's good enough.

Safety of the existing provision:

Churchill Park is our second biggest park in Cambridge, but its design is poor. It's relatively safe but to exit the park and go back to the parking lot, you have to walk through the outfield of a baseball game that has no walls. The soccer fields are at the back and the baseball diamonds are in the middle but walking all the way around is way too long. So the risk of being struck by a baseball is very possible. Another strange design is inside Duncan McIntosh Arena, it has very few seats however 2 rows up a puck can easily hit you. So there isn't any protection in such a condensed arena and I have seen injuries happen because of this. Financially, I think the whole facility needs to be taken down and re-done. It is the one I feel most passionate about changing because there are so many things that can be fixed but only doing one isn't enough. So spending all of the money in re-modelling the facility is best. It is extreme and it may be more necessary instead to just build a different recreational facility downtown.

External reports

Contributions from the review of policies and practices:

- Dimensions of facility (width of aisles, dressing rooms)
- Gender equity (bathrooms including both genders)
- Resources (water fountains, objects like netting, glass etc.)

If approved by the city of Cambridge, the facility still needs to be renovated/ created without exceeding any boundaries, damaging the property or anybody else's and mainly treated with respect. There are social factors that must always be enforced and resources that must be included to have the overall balance of a functional facility.

Scope

To improve the delivery of programs, facilities and services, it is in best interest to simply ask the people what they would like. What programs is our city missing? Simple questions like that can be on an easy and quick survey. But in other forms of collaboration among stakeholders, online interviews are a safer way to conduct business while ensuring the safety of everyone during COVID but it's up to the people to decide what is missing in terms of programs & services.

Issues from the planning project that can contribute to other orgs.

Construction is the big one, this delays more developments of new apartment buildings that seem to be being built all over. This also stops the idea of a new hotel downtown for the meantime. Another issue with this is if renovation of the facility is decided, the whole property will need time to be upgraded removing the possibility to utilize it making less people participate in activities while also creating traffic going around the park. When in construction, most of the city's resources are pushed to finishing the task leaving other issues out there being that the roads need to be patched too. Volunteers aiding in the developments of facilities will also limit effort for their other projects ex: work performance falls apart due to all of the person's effort in helping the community instead. Most of the community is working on this change, construction workers just get told the plan but to create the plan takes out leisure time on the residents.

Participation

Are there leisure and recreation trends that have not been responded to in the past that are disadvantageous to some individuals or groups in the community?

Cricket is one example that I will mention in the recommendations on how nobody has really responded to the idea of it. It is in a strange location after all and nobody has even really heard of it outside of West Galt.

Public skates are also a little too unpopular, at Dickson Arena they don't provide skates either or skate sharpenings so it's not much more than a frozen pond.

What provision may be needed in order to reflect wider provision trends and standards of provision?

Aside from renovations, growing the programs are important and still nobody has really heard of it. It's never on the website or in the Cambridge news so I would start there, giving residents a heads up on what the community has to offer. Social media is also key considering everyone is on technology, and schools need more gateway for these programs. There isn't really a single school in the city that offers all of the same programs. It seems that one school doesn't have a women's hockey team and one does. So providing more options like free skates or teaching you how to skate lessons will bring more people out there and participate.

What programs, facilities and services may need upgrading, changing or adding to better reflect trends?

I believe organization is one of the most important factors, it doesn't seem organized to have only one 50m long swimming pool in Cambridge, or one soccer dome being on the outskirts of the city 30 mins away. They renovated Galt Arena Gardens because it looked like a rodeo, but they still maintained the cultural integrity that it had been the oldest operating hockey arena in Canada.

THE PLAN

The plan is to remodel three facilities and create a new one. The first task is to decide which location in Cambridge should be the spot for a new facility. The goal is to have at least one Ice Rink with a running track and plenty of office space. I think the best space for the arena is in Southeast Galt on Dundas St. and Myers Road as a single facility. Replacing Duncan McIntosh with a soccer dome would lead residents to its next door neighbour on Myers Rd. at the newest facility. Pools have always been an aspect to the city that's been missed, with the ongoing renovation to the Preston Auditorium building its twin pad, Karl Homuth should be decommissioned and turned into a 50m swimming pool being in perfect location since Preston is missing an indoor center. A timeline for Karl Homuth should be a bit after the finalization of the Preston Aud, preferably a half-year. Dickson Center is a facility that is falling apart and really shouldn't exist anymore, replacing it sure isn't a priority but keeping it is killing the city. And last but the best, Galt Arena Gardens only needs more accessible transportation. Bus rides aren't enough and it is on the more residential side but not by much. Hespeler Road could use it for sure but it is busy enough as well.

What's after all that?

Next is to bring in the recreational programs, we have great organizations for our competitive sports but not enough variety in our more relaxed ones. This is necessary to increase growth in appearances at the new facilities as building it won't be enough. However, Kevin Costner said otherwise in the Field of Dreams "If you build it, they will come". But, I would still stay away from relying on that factor :)

Recomendations

Recreation programs have been difficult to have with select sports, basketball is most commonly at YMCA's, Ice Hockey has like three in Cambridge because teams of every age are practicing every other day on the rink, and baseball is always occupied as well. So I think they're should be more recreational programs that aren't 'organized sports' but are almost like school's intramurals. We have two rinks that do public skating for only 4 hours every sunday. Funnily enough, those arenas are our worst one's. The lack of facilities is still an issue that just gets worse with the increase in population but all the other rinks should be targeted as well.

Karl Homuth is rarely used because its nextdoor neighbour Preston Aud is far superior. Adding a swimming pool there would solve the issue of not having enough pools in the city, especially being 50m long.

The Dickson Center has never been utilized to its maximum value, it is very old and so small that 12+ years organized teams don't play there.

Galt Arena Gardens is a great facility, but nobody can get there due to transportation issues. It is located basically in the middle of Galt, however it is a drive from outside residential areas.

Duncan McIntosh is all over the place as it can't decide what sport is its main priority. With the issue of safety, the skateboarding space, and even the forests around it aren't very taken care of, it most definitely needs to change.

We should bring more yearly events to the city as it is something we've never had that was super popular.

When talking about seasonal sports, soccer is one that we could see growth of players with an indoor facility in Cambridge.

Most of our recreation programs are at the YMCA, so every facility should have a couple programs varying for divided ages and gender. I also think we should have more programs at school's in its after hours so seniors don't have to travel to one location every time.

Tennis is another activity that we don't have much of in terms of programs, but having only 2 locations, that's the case.

Lastly, creating programs for cricket is needed as it is very unorganized and the city hasn't cared too much for it. There is a field next to my house for it but that is the only location in the entire city.

Proposed M&E Strategies

How should this plan be monitored/ evaluated?

DEADLINES:

Inserting strict deadlines creates a flow to this project. Tasks will be completed in order before a deadline to demonstrate its necessity in importance and professionalism. Including assistance of stakeholders will bring teamwork to the best outcome especially with its aid in resources. Having progress updates with the City of Cambridge's Board will send more directions to how the plan will take place. If anything changes like another wave of Covid, it's best to come to a temporary halt in the project until it's safe to continue. Creating a facility that can take on an even larger increase in population is the whole goal lasting until 2040 at least without any huge renovations. Surveys with residents before, during and after the project is also important to have outside stakeholders monitor the adjustments as well.

How will I judge its success?

Seeing an increase in participants in newly added programs at our facilities will be successful, but to judge its success midway through, it all comes to developments and everybody being in agreement. It's a change that the community should be willing to and want to make, so having residents consistently offer assistance will give an impression on their desire to participate more after its construction. But after its completion, judging success by its numbers would be the growth in all ages participating in some form of physical activity or leisure time. Also creating more job opportunities to host more recreational programs will bring more participants, especially with the tight schedules it is difficult for adults to play when there is only one hour a week to play a certain sport. So seeing an increase in popularity at facilities brings in more funds to repay the debts of the making of facilities.

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Appendices

Key actions

1. Ask residents for wants and needs on recreational opportunities
2. Ask Waterloo Region what's on the table
3. Propose the ideas:
4. If granted, begin with letting city of Cambridge complete Preston Auditorium renovations before beginning Karl Homuth
5. Begin the replacement of Duncan McIntosh Arena before the start of Summer 22' and have it completed by Fall 23'
6. Decommission Dickson Arena by Summer 24'
7. Have a new recreational facility by Fall 27'