

Rosenthal Park Site Outdoor Recreation Facility

Status Report

RECOMMENDATION

That the January 31, 2022, Community Services report CS00675, be received for information.

Report Purpose

Information only

Committee is being provided information on the status of a community-initiated request to construct and operate two covered artificial ice surfaces and an amenity building called Rosenthal Outdoor Recreation Centre and Community Hub on Rosenthal Park. This proposed project is a collaborative venture between the Rosenthal Community League and Active Communities Alberta.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the May 28, 2021, Community and Public Services Committee meeting, the following motion passed:

That Administration provide a status report on the proposed outdoor recreation facility at the Rosenthal Park site.

Executive Summary

- In 2021, Active Communities Alberta and the Rosenthal Community League approached the City about an opportunity to develop an outdoor recreation facility within the Rosenthal neighbourhood. It would be the first of its kind in Edmonton and would provide all season outdoor recreation opportunities for Edmontonians.
- Administration has and continues to work with the groups to advance the project.
- The proponent's current preferred location is on City owned parkland in the Rosenthal neighbourhood that has not yet been graded, top soiled and seeded.
- Additional site feasibility would need to be conducted by the proponents and lease negotiations would need to be completed between all parties to determine whether the site is suitable.

Rosenthal Park Site Outdoor Recreation Facility - Status Report

REPORT

In February 2021, Active Communities Alberta and the Rosenthal Community League began discussing opportunities to develop an outdoor recreation facility within the Rosenthal neighbourhood. The proposed facility would include two outdoor roofed rinks with a refrigeration system in the concrete rink pads to maintain ice through fall, winter and spring. During the summer the facility could be used for activities such as lacrosse, ball hockey, or community events.

In a typical project, a site is confirmed before the project moves into the concept phase of the City's Project Development and Delivery Model per Policy C591 - Capital Project Governance. In this case, a site has yet to be confirmed for this project. In discussions between Administration and the proponents, three potential sites were identified.

Site #1 - Lewis Farms Community Recreation Centre and District Park Site

Discussions about the proposed project took place throughout 2021, prior to the 2021 fall supplemental budget adjustments. Known challenges and considerations include:

- If the outdoor recreation facility was going to be added to this site, site servicing, stormwater management, internal roadways, and other internal site preparation costs would have had to be considered.
- If the project were to be included as part of the approved design of the Lewis Farms Community Recreation Centre and Park project, additional public engagement would have been required and could have resulted in the removal of already approved park elements.
- Active Communities Alberta and the Rosenthal Community League would have been responsible for redesign costs in addition to the costs of completing their portion of the project.

As part of the fall 2021 supplemental capital budget adjustments, Council approved funding for the Lewis Farms Community Recreation Centre. Altogether, these factors made the Lewis Farms Facility and Park site prohibitive, eliminating the site as a viable option.

Site #2 - City-owned Licensed Land

The City-owned land currently licensed to the Rosenthal Community League is an option, with the intention that the project could proceed through the Community-Led Construction Project process. The land has been developed to grade level and seeded, so a project could potentially proceed more quickly on this site; however, that would have to be confirmed through additional due diligence. Known challenges and considerations include:

- The community league has expressed concerns that if the covered rinks are located on this site there would be little room to develop other planned community league amenities. As such, this is not the preferred option for the proponents.
- The site is currently zoned as AP (Public Parkland) and is designated as Municipal Reserve. The Municipal Reserve designation would need to be removed through the established process, including a public hearing.

Rosenthal Park Site Outdoor Recreation Facility - Status Report

- Additional due diligence would be required to determine the site's developability including a geotechnical investigation, site servicing assessment, and transportation/parking analysis of the site to determine viability and costs.

Site #3 - City-owned Parkland

The third option is a portion of City-owned parkland north of the Rosenthal Community League's licensed land (Attachment 1) and is the proponents' preferred location. The land has not yet been graded, top soiled and seeded. Additional analysis would be required to determine if the site is suitable for the facility or whether there are conditions that would impact the design, construction, operation and costs. Known challenges and considerations include:

- The site is currently zoned as AP and is designated as Municipal Reserve. As with Site #2, the Municipal Reserve designation would need to be removed.
- The site is part of the Joint Use Agreement with Edmonton Public Schools and they intend to build a kindergarten to grade nine school at this location; the City is required to provide sports fields to support the new school. Both buildings could fit on the site but would impact one or more of the planned soccer fields. The proponent has indicated that the school would have access to the facility, however terms and conditions for access to the facility would need to be negotiated as part of the business case development.
- The same due diligence as noted for Site #2 would be required for this site.

In order to protect the interests of all involved, the City cannot provide confirmation to the proponents until the above analyses are completed and considered for their preferred location. City confirmation of a site is required in order to effectively fundraise for the project.

If the project is feasible, Active Communities Alberta proposes to operate the facility through a long-term lease with the City. Lease arrangements would have to be determined.

Next Steps

Administration met with the proponents in early January 2022 to share information and suggest that the proponents engage a land development consultant to undertake a site feasibility study of Site #3, as well as any other locations they may be considering. A feasibility study is estimated to cost \$60,000 to \$70,000, which would be paid for by the proponents. Information from the study would enable the group to complete a strategy phase business case as required in the Community-Led Construction Project process.

Following confirmation of a location that is feasible for the project, an understanding of subdivision requirements, and negotiation of terms and conditions of a lease agreement, Administration intends to bring forward a reserve removal request for City Council's consideration and approval.

Administration will continue to meet with the group on a regular basis to fulfill the feasibility study requirements and move the project forward. As the project proposal proceeds, formal discussions with Edmonton Public Schools about the impacts of the facility on the planned sports fields will be required.

Rosenthal Park Site Outdoor Recreation Facility - Status Report

Budget/Financial Implications

The proponents provided a preliminary cost estimate for construction of the facility that totalled \$6 million. The cost estimate does not include any required items that could be identified through the feasibility study or any additional changes required to meet the standards set out in Council Policy C627 Climate Resilience Policy. The community league is holding \$250,000 in funding to contribute to the project. Active Communities Alberta reports having fundraised \$500,000 for the project to date.

The proponents have not approached the City for funding and the City has not made any financial commitments to the project to date. The proponents have indicated they will be responsible for costs associated with this project; however, until the feasibility study is completed and potential costs identified, Administration cannot confirm if the proponents could absorb the full costs or would require financial contribution.

The proponents have advised they cannot effectively fundraise without a confirmed location but the location cannot be confirmed until the proponents complete the feasibility study.

COMMUNITY INSIGHT

Active Communities Alberta became interested in developing outdoor covered rinks based on the model and experience in Toronto, where the first covered ice rink was developed in 2013 at Greenwood Park. The rink is used for skating in winter and ball hockey in summer.

In April 2021, the Rosenthal Community League surveyed current neighbourhood residents as part of a neighbourhood needs assessment. Of the 593 respondents to the survey, 63 per cent supported the facility being constructed on Site #3, while 23 per cent preferred the Lewis Farms site and 12 per cent were neutral. Additional public engagement would be required throughout project development if the Rosenthal Park Site Outdoor Recreation Facility proceeds.

Administration has made Edmonton Public Schools aware of the proposed project but formal engagement has not been conducted. They have expressed interest in the concept but are deferring formal comment until they have had an opportunity to review the details of the proposal. Formal engagement will occur as information on the proposed site and project viability are clearer.

GBA+

The proposed facility would be open for rental and use by anyone, at set rates; however, the proposed location would not increase equitable access to ice rink amenities for all Edmontonians (Attachment 2). Rosenthal is a diverse neighbourhood when compared to Edmonton as a whole with a fairly equal number of children and working age adults in the neighbourhood and a significantly higher proportion of residents that identified as immigrants or residents without Canadian citizenship. The diversity of the community suggests the needs and interests of residents could vary significantly.

City staff provide support and guidance to non-profit community groups seeking to build amenities on public parkland; however, different neighbourhoods may have differing access and

Rosenthal Park Site Outdoor Recreation Facility - Status Report

ability to organize, fundraise and advocate for community-led projects. Inequity can especially occur in neighbourhoods where Edmontonians are challenged to meet basic household needs and do not have the time or capacity to participate in engagement sessions or activities and programs. This effect has been compounded because of the COVID-19 pandemic and has resulted in changes to individuals, organizational and business priorities. As part of the prioritization process for the development of the 2023-2026 capital budget, Administration will apply an equity analysis to the parks and open space capital development framework.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Rosenthal Area Plan Aerial View
2. GBA+ Reporting