

HOK provides report on Rexall Place

EDMONTON, AB — HOK Sport, an internationally-renowned architectural practice, involved in major league arena development, provided an analysis today of the future potential relative to the possible re-creation of Rexall Place. Representatives of HOK were in Edmonton to make presentations at the joint meeting of the Northlands Board of Directors and the Arena Ad Hoc Committee, struck by Northlands.

“Northlands is inextricably tied to the history of hockey in this city,” says Ken Knowles, Northlands General Manager and Chief Operating Officer. “In the early 70s, members of the Northlands Board of Directors, led by Harry Hole, had the vision to build the Coliseum (Rexall Place), making it possible for the residents of Edmonton and north-central Alberta to enjoy professional hockey. Since that time, we have been partners with the City of Edmonton and the Oilers ownership groups in a unique financial arrangement that was structured to ensure NHL hockey remained viable in the Edmonton market. Looking to the future, we engaged HOK to ensure that we have the best information to understand the possibilities as we move forward with our partners — the Edmonton Oilers Hockey Club, the City of Edmonton and most importantly, our patrons.”

“As the owner/operator of one of Edmonton’s best known community assets, we felt it was important to take a leadership role. We asked HOK to answer several key questions. Can this building be recreated? If so under what circumstances and at what cost?” says Andy Huntley, Northlands Second Vice-President and Chair of the Facilities Planning and Development Committee.

“Our report outlines what would have to be done to make Rexall Place a modern arena by increasing the public areas and making it a much more comfortable and enjoyable environment for patrons. It also addresses adding space ‘back of house’ to improve the experience for the many athletes, performers and their support personnel who make the games and shows possible. We worked on a conceptual budget with the valued assistance of PCL Construction Management Inc. and estimate that the construction costs would range from \$225 to \$250 million with a three to four year window of construction during the off-season,” says Rick Martin, Senior Principal, HOK Sport.

“This study has given us valuable information and the Oilers were very pleased to participate,” says Patrick LaForge, President and Chief Executive Officer, Edmonton Oilers Hockey Club.

Al Maurer, City Manager, City of Edmonton, sat on the Committee. “The City also values this assessment and we see it as a very good step to build our knowledge as we work together to investigate future options,” says Maurer.

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“This work was a necessary step in the process of understanding what is possible, but clearly Rexall Place is not the only option. There is much to be considered and discussions need to take place with the many groups that have a stake in the future of a facility of this kind. What we do know is that a city of this size can only sustain one major arena,” says Huntley. “Northlands is well-known for its operational expertise and when you combine this with our mandate to reinvest all our earnings back into the facilities we operate, we ensure a facility of this kind will be viable, maintained and serve the community for years to come. We are committed to all the people who enjoy the great experiences and support the many key activities a major league arena makes possible — such as NHL hockey, headliner concerts, the Canadian Finals Rodeo and national and international events, including the World Figure Skating Championships, the Brier and the upcoming Ford World Men’s Curling Championships.”

“It is an important journey for all of us as we look at the future of our city and make a decision about an Edmonton arena. At Northlands we are dedicated to understanding all the possibilities and to being an integral part of the solution that is in the best interests of the community,” says Huntley.

Northlands rocks this city with 2,500 events each year that attract over 3.5 million visitors. Think Canadian Finals Rodeo, Farmfair International, Capital EX, Oilers hockey, the best of horse racing, headliner concerts, international events and all the trade shows you can handle. Visit northlands.com to find out more.

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Media Contact:
Dinah Gray
Corporate Relations Manager
Northlands
780.471.7295
780.902.3723 cell
dgray@northlands.com

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