



Staff Report

Community Services

Report To: COW-Finance, Admin, Fire, Legal, Community Services
Meeting Date: August 14, 2023
Report Number: CSOPS.23.050
Title: Feasibility Assessment – Regional Consideration
Prepared by: Ryan Gibbons, Director Community Services

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report CSOPS.23.050, entitled “Feasibility Assessment – Regional Consideration”;

AND THAT Council directs staff to collaborate with staff from the Town of Collingwood regarding a blending of resources to accomplish a feasibility assessment that incorporates both municipalities’ needs.

B. Overview

This report is requesting direction from Council to collaborate with the Town of Collingwood on a multi-use recreation facility feasibility assessment that will provide recommendations to both communities regarding recreation facility needs.

C. Background

The Town of the Blue Mountains has approved funding toward the delivery of a feasibility assessment, as advised by the 2021 Leisure Activities Plan. The Town of Collingwood has approved funding toward the delivery of a feasibility assessment, as advised by their 2019 Parks Recreation and Culture Master Plan. Both Plans indicated opportunities to, at least, review regional potential for the purpose of: efficiency, to reduce redundancy, and to provide accurate delivery of services throughout a future timeframe.

The Collingwood Library’s 2022 Strategic Plan highlighted the need for versatile space and the Collingwood Public Library Board provided direction to review expansion or relocation feasibility. Collingwood Council supported the Board’s direction with the approval of Library budget to complete this study. The model of integrating library services into a community centre has proven effective in several municipalities across the province. As such, it is being blended with the municipality’s approach, as a measure of efficiency and timing opportunity. It is not an expectation or objective of this study to determine any combination of municipal library services.

The Blue Mountains Public Library presented a deputation to the Town of The Blue Mountains Council June 14, 2023, proposing support in principle for a new library facility in the Eastern portion of The Blue Mountains. Council directed staff to include the library as a key stakeholder through the feasibility assessment.

In a municipal context, a feasibility assessment is a tool used to confirm community needs, in a prioritized framework, for both the current timeframe as well as a defined future scope. This assessment also reviews business alternatives to determine the most effective means of delivering services. It often utilizes a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis of current conditions, alongside community consultation, research of best practices, planning and forecasting tools, and the contextual review and application of other municipal plans and documents to provide more information that will allow Council to make a “go/no-go” decision on further progressing plans for a major capital project.

Public engagement will be a key factor in this approach, as well as consultation with local and Provincial Sport Organizations, third-party recreation providers, and group-users of community space. Given the investment that will be required to support a successful project outcome, 50-year future outlook is identified as being an advisable period for consideration within the study.

High level costing and next steps recommendations may also be included within a feasibility assessment.

D. Analysis

In discussions between staff at the Town of the Blue Mountains and Collingwood, the complimentary timing and concurrent direction of each department’s Master Plan indicated that, at the very least, direction from each municipal Council would be desirable before launching independent Request for Proposal to consult on concurrent activities.

Everything from a clearer regional assessment of needs to potential upper tier funding in the future, supports the concept of a collaborative approach. However, feasible outcomes may yield a range of possibilities that include recommendations to distribute recreation activity between the two communities in reflection of localized municipal priorities, that each municipality pursue their own specific agenda regardless of the other, that there be further consultation with other adjoining municipalities, or a single combined facility. It is recognized that some of these outcomes may present challenging prospects for Councils to work with as residents may desire all services within local boundaries. Even recognizing potential efficiencies, and the elevated quality potentials with a distributed or shared approach, comes with important considerations around equitable investment in facility governance and operations and a longer-term collaborative partnership between communities.

In recognizing the close nature, geographically and culturally, between the Town of the Blue Mountains and Collingwood, and that overlap in services provided to each other’s constituency exists today, staff felt it was appropriate to offer the option of a regional approach.

E. Strategic Priorities

1. Communication and Engagement

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders

2. Organizational Excellence

We will continually seek out ways to improve the internal organization of Town Staff and the management of Town assets.

3. Community

We will protect and enhance the community feel and the character of the Town, while ensuring the responsible use of resources and restoration of nature.

4. Quality of Life

We will foster a high quality of life for full-time and part-time residents of all ages and stages, while welcoming visitors.

F. Environmental Impacts

None at this time but there will be consideration if a municipal facility is recommended.

G. Financial Impacts

If both municipal Councils provide direction to proceed with a collaborative approach, staff recommend that the approved budgets be blended into an upset limit of \$200,000 for the enhanced project scope, with \$100,000 committed from each municipality. Staff also recommend that the remainder of each municipality's approved budget be held in reserve for unforeseen adaptations that may be required as the project proceeds. A procurement process will be issued by one municipality out of necessity (i.e., via one vendor marketplace account), but jointly evaluated by staff from each municipality, to determine optimal costing, compliance, and ability to achieve the desired deliverables of the project. This joint approach to an procurement process will be guided under the advice of the applicable Procurement department to ensure best industry standards are practiced and upheld.

The Town of The Blue Mountains has an approved budget of \$140,000 to complete this assessment.

H. In Consultation With

Dean Collver, Director of Parks Recreation and Culture, Town of Collingwood

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been the subject of a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Ryan Gibbons, Director Community Services directorcs@thebluemountains.ca.

J. Attached

None

Respectfully submitted,

Ryan Gibbons
Director Community Services

For more information, please contact:
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