

A
“Vision”

Barrhaven Community & Cultural Centre”

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INTRODUCTION

A decision was made in June 2017 to investigate the possibility of building a multifaceted complex in Barrhaven to answer the requirements of the increasing multicultural population – including seniors and youth.

A thorough review was required to complete an analysis for all physical spaces. The interior and the exterior design need to be finalized to move the process forward.

The process that evolved was initiated by Don Winchester – President, Barrhaven Seniors’ Council - and by Phil Denyes who has extensive experience in building and promoting world class facilities throughout North America (ie: Canada’s Sports Hall of Fame; Atlanta Motor Speedway; Daytona USA; Canada’s Hockey Hall of Fame & Museum; etc.)

Both Don and Phil realized that a clear “Vision” Statement needed to be prepared for review. To move the process to the next stage all potential “stakeholders” in the Project need to be in agreement.

A “Vision” has evolved that results in a recommendation to develop a “Community & Cultural Centre” in Barrhaven that will include a major focus on the rapidly expanding multicultural and senior population groups in Barrhaven.

The present and future needs for Barrhaven's diverse population and large numbers of community groups can be addressed with a well-planned, carefully designed complex.

Questions that needed further discussion included:

- Looking 20 to 30 years ahead in terms of the community mix and its needs;
- Site selection, including a defined rationale as to the size of the property;
- Understanding future demographics and the evolving needs of an aging society;
- Rationale for interior & exterior spaces;
- A public meeting site for cultural events and celebrations;
- Best practice planning that respects the environment; and
- Developing a 3 P Partnership business strategy.

Background Information:

According to the 2016 census, 29% of Ottawa's population was older than 55. In addition, a recent report indicates that by 2036 this percentage will rise to 33% - with 20% of the overall population of Ottawa being older than 65% and 4% older than 85. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/ottawa-public-health-seniors-diversity-1.4818175>

Looking specifically at Barrhaven, the numbers are further reflective of an aging society. The 2011 census indicated that there are 72,324 people living in Barrhaven- with a projected population in 2021 of 95,000. The population of Seniors will more than double between 2016-2031. In 2031, one in five residents in Barrhaven will be over 65 years of age. Between 2016 and 2031, the 74-84 age segment will experience the largest overall growth rates.

The multicultural mix of Ottawa's population has grown to 16% of the 55+ population – up from 10% in 2001. Visible minorities now make up 43% of the residents occupying private households in southern Barrhaven, compared to the city-wide average of 20%.

<http://www.davidmckie.com/highest-rise-in-visible-minority-population-in-barrhaven/>

As we then examined the needs of the Barrhaven in the future, it was noted that the community is served very well in terms of sports facilities (both indoor and outdoor).

However, there is no “community hub” in Barrhaven– no centralized, large facility in which to accommodate the needs of an aging, multicultural population.

It is important to note the “mindset' of Baby Boomers when the “Vision” is developed. This age group with 1946-1964 birth dates do not identify themselves as “Seniors.”

In any examination for future marketing strategies and policy implications, there needs to be a focus on the Baby Boomer generation. A discussion point becomes how the word “Senior” is used when it is integrated into the “Community and Cultural Centre's” name.

In their “Examination of Best Practice in Multi-Service Senior Centres” for The Kerby Centre (Calgary), the Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family (March 8, 2013) noted that there are many challenges to be considered when developing a Senior Focused Complex. Referencing a research study done by “Pardasani, Sporre & Thompson” in 2009, they summarized the main challenges as follows:

1. Continuing to serve the current participants effectively while trying to engage non-participating older adults;
2. Attracting “Baby Boomers” and younger “Seniors;”
3. Re-conceptualizing participation in the new era of increased consumer choices;
4. Competing with other community options and alternatives to Senior Centres;
5. Re-inventing the image of Senior Centres and re-position them as community focal points through marketing and outreach;
6. Developing strategic partnerships by collaborating with other service providers;
7. Re-designing and re-building of modern facilities; and 8. Attracting potential funders/individuals to expand and innovate facilities and programs.

<http://www.crilf.ca/Documents/Best%20Practice%20in%20Senior%20Centres%20-%20Mar%202013.pdf> (pg. 4)

Their report further noted that “Senior centres must enhance their capacity to meet the challenging needs of the older adult population.”

Ingenuity must be incorporated into a facilities design and programming.

Moving to a completely new country is a major challenge at many levels for multicultural individuals.

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Ottawa Community Immigration Service Organizations' main goal is to help Ottawa immigrants to get their bearings and settle seamlessly into their chosen community.

Barrhaven could represent what Canada aspires...a true and thriving multicultural community.

Many different things attract people from various ethnic backgrounds. A "Barrhaven Community and Cultural Centre would serve as a major asset.

The First Steps in Designing a Multi-Purpose
Community and Cultural Centre are:

- Facility design should be approached using the expertise of architects, designers and product representatives who are experienced with the relevant demographic "target" group;
- Build a "best-practice" model which requires rigorous and ongoing evaluation of programs and services; and
- Strategic partnerships/sponsorships are critical to sustainability.

Physical spaces that are needed for a Community Centre, with a focus on "Seniors," need to go through a complex review.

A 2012 study conducted by the International Council on Active Aging indicated that diverse physical space is needed to promote all dimensions of wellness – physical; intellectual; vocational; environmental; emotional; spiritual; and social interaction.

Included in the building design process are offices for professional services: Doctors, Dentists and Physiotherapy. These would not only provide services to residents of the adjacent 55+ and Seniors' housing and the wider Barrhaven Community – but, would provide a substantial ongoing revenue stream in conjunction with other businesses located within the complex.

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Research indicates that there are many other groups in Barrhaven and area that would be interested in using the facilities meeting rooms, special presentation area etc. at this new multicultural and senior focused complex.

There are corporations and small businesses throughout Ottawa that would rent the facility

Social events such as weddings would be frequent events.

The P-4 Public-Private Partnership model appears to be the most desirable route to follow: Public + Private and funded by both Public Revenue Streams (Federal + Provincial) and Private capital working together to achieve the realization of this complex in a timely fashion.

Timing:

It is recommended that the strategy for this project is to “fast-track” it on all levels. The “Vision Statement” has been reviewed and approved at all government levels.

The “Canada Infrastructure Plan (Social Component) provides for a 40% contribution from the Federal Government, and 33%+ from the Province of Ontario.

Recent meetings with the City of Ottawa have resulted in very positive response to proceeding with this project as soon as possible.

"Approval In Principle" by all parties involved would be the next step. We would hope that this could now occur by this summer 2019.

It is anticipated that the architect should have their work completed by mid 2020 - followed immediately by a call for project tenders. Shovels in the ground would occur shortly thereafter.

THE “VISION” STATEMENT

A “Vision” to develop a Master Plan for a Barrhaven “Community and Cultural Centre” is required to move to the next steps. The opportunity exists to build a professionally run facility that will be a legacy project for Barrhaven, creating many FTE jobs for the community.

It appears to strategically make sense to combine a facility that will both serve the needs of the strong “cultural mosaic” of the community and the need to address the 55+ demographic.

This project can result in a building that serves as a “hub” for Barrhaven. It is the preferred gathering place for citizens of Barrhaven for celebrations. The following items will encourage input from “key stakeholders” involved with the project.

Location

In consultation with the City of Ottawa’s Older Adult plan personnel about where in Barrhaven a community and cultural centre would be best situated, they recommend “...that the Centre be situated close to a main transit hub and provide easily accessible parking spaces.”

The Community Development Plan for Barrhaven clearly indicates that the primary transit hub is located east of or close to the current intersection of Greenbank and Jockvale.

This location would provide access to the Bus Rapid Transit corridors:

- north on the existing corridor to VIA Station and to the future LRT station at Algonquin College;
- the east transit corridor through Barrhaven to the future LRT station in River Side South; and
- the future western extension of the corridor leading to Highway 416 and other shopping areas such as the new Costco/Marshalls/Dollarama plaza.

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This new complex will be located on a minimum of 3.5 acres of land to accommodate the building, parking, restaurant, patio, exterior gardens, amphitheatre, and walking trail.

The interior of the “Community and Cultural Centre” complex will be approximately 50,000 to 60,000 square feet in size.

The exterior of the building will be eye catching, and a well-respected architect will have been hired to bring the building to life.

Design features of the entire complex will have a combination of a modern and comfort design.

Some of the exterior elements could include a clock tower and waterfall. Ample parking is incorporated into the design of the complex, with a separate side entrance for the 55+ Senior Centre having close in parking.

The parking lot is full as the complex attracts clientele on a daily basis for corporate and cultural engagements, theatre and lecture patrons, restaurant customers and regular programming.

The Community and Cultural Centre is named for the local developer who, as part of the Public/Private Partnership, provided the 3.5 acres of land for the project. Other naming rights would include the theatre.

Land surrounding the building consists of very appealing gardens that become a gathering place in Barrhaven.

The design of the grounds also provides an amphitheatre for local concerts throughout the year. There is also a walking track around the perimeter of the property.

Soon after the building has opened, it is recognized as the “hot spot” for weddings and corporate events.

The interior of the Community & Cultural Centre is designed to answer the requirements of Barrhaven citizens 55+ as well as community, multicultural, and school groups.

Due diligence has been incorporated into all components so that the building will be viable for many years after it is built.

Key features of the main building are:

The "anchor" for the Cultural and Community Centre will be a state of the art Theatre complex.

The theatre will have seating for 500 to 550 guests and include all the requisites facilitating live theatre and musical productions for professional, local and school groups. A rehearsal room [2,000 square feet] will be part of the theatre footprint. Total size for the entire theatre complex is 40,000 square feet.

Research indicates that a theatre for Barrhaven should be occupied for 250 days of the year. There will be an opportunity to develop a legacy program with schools in Barrhaven that will include summer camps.

Unique Features:

- - a 500 to 550 seat Theatre (the “anchor” for the Cultural and Community Centre);
- - Reception/Lounge area;
- - Dining Room;
- - Cafe/restaurant/catering facilities;
- - Music Rehearsal Studio;
- - Dance/group exercise studios;

Complementary Community Components:

- - a Sports Court (ie; basketball; badminton; table tennis; etc.)
- - Fitness Rooms;
- - Multi-purpose rooms;
- - Craft & Hobby Rooms.
- - Computer area;
- - Games room;
- - Changing and locker rooms;
- - Snack and Juice Bar.

Sponsorship partners have been incorporated into the interior design of the building. These sponsors, with their long term agreements, assist in ensuring the ongoing financial viability of the complex, and that the 55+ experience of the Centre will be kept up to date with the latest technology.

The popularity - especially of the Special Presentation Area - makes the building very appealing for Corporate Ottawa. Food services on site make it possible to stay on site for a day's meeting.

The Meeting & Special Presentation area is also used on a regular basis for seminars/information sessions for all tenants.

Local concerts, school events and plays are also held in the theatre.

The computer area is sponsored by a company such as "Dell." It is not in the back corner of a building like so many older Seniors Centres, but rather one of the showcase features.

The cafe is modern and has a professional restaurant owner running it. Residents of Barrhaven will visit the cafe on a regular basis.

Additional business opportunities for the cafe through their special breakfast menu – both those in the adjacent housing, as well as those who will be frequenting the complex every morning and afternoon

A unique feature for the cafe owner, is a special weekly meal program for seniors, daily use of the main building by Members of the Barrhaven Seniors Council, and its close proximity to other Retirement Residences and apartment complexes. Through this program, seniors are offered weekly access to subsidized meals (similar to those through the Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre "Diners Club" program).

The multi-purpose rooms are designed to answer the many needs of the 55+ and multicultural groups. These rooms are colourful and well-equipped.

Change rooms are able to meet the needs of large groups if required – incorporating adaptations for mobility issues.

The games room is a “true” games room with many options for visitors available.

Exercise/Dance Studios will be designed to make sure that all age groups find the rooms comfortable and inviting.

The intention of this project is to focus on the needs of youth, the 55+ and multi-cultural community – not to duplicate expensive to maintain facilities that would be close to this complex in Barrhaven.

Barrhaven is already well served in terms of recreational facilities. Recently, the Minto Recreation Centre in “South Barrhaven” complemented those at the Walter Baker Recreation Complex in Old Barrhaven. Plans exist to add a new recreation facility in Riverside South which will provide options for those living in East Barrhaven. These facilities, and other private family oriented facilities within the existing Barrhaven community continue to answer many of the needs of Barrhaven residents and make it a better place to live.

CONCLUSION

The “Vision” for a much needed Community and Cultural Centre is recognized as a “legacy” project for Barrhaven.

The “momentum” with all stakeholders for this project should continue through the remaining months of 2019.

Funding is facilitated through the joint Federal/Provincial agreement “Investing In Canada Infrastructure Program (Social Component).”