Q&A: Twin-pad arena and library projects

Wasaga Beach – The construction of a new twin-pad arena and library is a council priority this term.

Council and staff are working closely together to move the project along.

This Q&A provides a factual look at the history of the project and its importance to our community.

Why do we need a new library and arena?

An assessment in 2013 determined the Wasaga Stars Arena is near the end of its lifespan as a full-service facility. The arena was built in 1973.

The library opened in 1994 when the town’s population was significantly less and library programming was far different than today.

The library is 4,500 square feet in size and too small to accommodate programs, user groups, or a population of 21,000 so a new facility is required. The library is not just about books, it is about having a space for the community to gather and learn.

In January 2019, council identified the twin-pad arena and library projects as priorities for this term. Since then, staff and council reviewed the merits of many sites, culminating in the selection of 544 River Rd. W.

When did council settle on a site?

In October 2019, council approved a site for the community’s new twin-pad arena and library.

Based on community input and following a formal review of all sites under consideration that used council-approved criteria, council selected the 544 River Rd. W. site in the town’s east end.
**Why was this location recommended?**

The joint-use twin-pad arena and library at 544 River Rd. W. was the strongest of the sites when measured against the criteria, including input from the public.

Locating both facilities at this site will provide a selection of cost savings:

- Project management for a single project;
- Building duplication efficiencies;
- Operational savings;
- The ability to meet some of the criteria of the Canada Infrastructure Grant Program.

From an operational perspective, a joint-use facility will enable management to share resources: staffing, meeting spaces, and programming.

From a user perspective, a joint-use facility will offer residents more services in one location, a positive for families with differing interests.

**How did the town formally consult with the public on these sites?**

In September 2019, the town launched a survey to gather public input. The survey was conducted on the town’s community engagement site [www.letstalkwasagabeach.ca](http://www.letstalkwasagabeach.ca).

**Was there any other consultation?**

Yes. On the community engagement site, people could share comments about their preferred sites.

The town also held an open house on Sept. 30, 2019. This took place at the RecPlex in the early evening. The public had a chance to review all relative information related to the various sites under consideration, including price and ask questions of staff and members of council.


All the input was factored in with the other criteria and resulted in the joint use facility at 544 River Rd. W. being recommended as the preferred site.

**How does the town plan to pay for the two facilities?**

Initially the town is using reserves and tax dollars. Normally, municipalities would borrow money for this type of expenditure to spread the cost over many years, similar to a mortgage. As well, council has applied for a Canada Infrastructure Grant.
What will happen if the town does not receive the grant or it is for a reduced amount?

The treasurer has been working on different funding scenarios based on receiving the grant, not receiving the grant or receiving less. She will be presenting an information report to council outlining the various scenarios and the funding options for council to consider once the results of the grant application are announced.

What are the total construction costs for the twin-pad arena and library?

The estimated cost of the project is $59.9-million.

What does the overall project budget look like?

- The cost to purchase the 11-acre building site and related fees at 544 River Rd. W. is $5.6-million.
- Consultant costs for the project are estimated at more than $4.2-million.
- The construction portion of the project budget is $40-million.
- Town expenditures: To complete the project the budget includes funds for furniture, fixtures and equipment, including appliances, etc. The total town expenditures budget is $8.5-million.
- Learn more here.

During the site selection phase of the project there was mention that the cost of the project was $36-million and now it is $59-million. What changed?

Initially, the construction portion of the budget was estimated to be $36-million and it has now increased to just over $40-million with a more refined design and current construction cost figures. The overall project budget has remained consistent at approximately $59.9-million.

Will the public have a role in what the buildings will look like?

Yes. There will be public consultation and stakeholder engagement during the design phase, although less about aesthetics and more about program features.

What program features are planned for each facility?

Twin-pad Arena

- Two NHL ice surfaces are proposed and one will have a section of fixed seating.
- Walking track and multi-purpose rooms with sufficient storage.
- Twelve team change rooms and smaller rooms for officials and coaches.
- Spacious lobby with sitting area.
- Central customer service desk.
- Canteen and tuck shop.
- Banquet hall similar to what exists at the Wasaga Stars Arena.
- Perhaps some space for a future Wasaga Beach Sports Hall of Fame.
- Total square feet of 96,000 square feet.

**Library**

- Shared lobby with the arena.
- Many collaborative learning spaces like digital and media labs where residents can try new technologies, including 3D printers and music recording equipment.
- A learning lab where people can develop skills from sewing to science.
- Collaborate spaces where people can study, meet with clients, or hold group meetings.
- Safe comfortable spaces to relax and meet with friends.
- Special activity and program zones to engage children.
- Space for teens to hang out.
- Places for visitors to use computers, work at tables, and access office services like printing, scanning and fax.
- Total square feet of approximately 24,000.

**How were the features of the twin-pad arena and library selected?**

In both 2018 and 2020, the Recreation, Events and Facilities Department reached out to community stakeholders for input on what programming and services are needed in the community, and how the new twin-pad arena could potentially meet these needs.

In late 2019, Wasaga Beach Public Library launched a needs assessment consultation to determine what new library spaces, services and programs are deemed important by community residents.

The Director of Recreation, Events and Facilities, and the Director of Library Services, brought this information to council. In April 2020, members of council individually identified the arena and library programming elements they deemed priorities for the new build.

Using the council approved $59.9-million budget as a guide, and council input, staff and the consultants identified the top ranking priorities that could be realistically included. A report went to council on June 11, 2020 recommending the features to be included and council approved the recommendation.
Tell me about the grant application the town is making in regards to this project?

In November 2019, the town applied for a Canada Infrastructure Grant. You can learn more about that here: http://bit.ly/32NCKKb.

Tell me about the need for a project manager?

Because of the large scope of the project, the town hired a project management company. You can read more about this here: http://bit.ly/2XgFcaP.

Who is the town’s project manager?

Council approved retaining Colliers International. The company was selected through a competitive RFP process. They have extensive experience with these types of projects. They are being paid a fee of $513,000 to assist the town in managing the project.

What are some of the latest developments with this project?

In June 2020, council approved the design scope – the program features and estimated square footage amounts – for the twin-pad arena and library. You can read more about this here.

What is the size of the facility?

The total square footage is 120,252 square feet.

The twinpad arena itself is 96,000 square feet.

The library is 24,251 square feet.

Are there other recent accomplishments on the project?

In June 2020, council approved entering into an agreement with MacLennan Jaunkalns Miller Architects Ltd. (MJMA), a Toronto-based firm, for the provision of design services for the new twinpad arena.

The firm’s fee for architect services is $3.1-million.

You can learn more about this award-winning firm, established in 1988, here.

Council at its June 30 meeting approved the site placement for the new twin-pad arena and library. Read the related staff report here and see the related schedule here.

What are the next steps?

Town staff, Colliers International, and MJMA will next be focussing on the following:
• Site plan and concept design – the layout of the building on the site, parking and landscaping.
• Twin-pad arena configuration, including players’ benches, penalty boxes, spectator seating layout, and change rooms, public spaces and walking track.
• Library configurations, whether one or two levels.
• Schematic design – the design of the buildings’ rooms and program spaces.
• Council approval of these elements.

We anticipate moving into finalizing the design into tender ready specifications by December 2020.

What are some of the key dates?

➢ Dec. 15, 2020 – construction documentation phase;
➢ May 30, 2021 – construction tender period;
➢ July 15, 2021 – award of construction contract;
➢ Sept. 15, 2022 – substantial completion
➢ Jan. 15, 2023 – project closeout/completion.

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