



CORPORATE REPORT

The Corporation of the Town of Wasaga Beach
Meeting Date: 3/27/2025

DATE: 3/18/2025

SUBJECT: K-12 School and Community Hub Update

CONTACT: Gerry Marshall, Deputy CAO and General Manager of Strategic Initiatives

REPORT NUMBER: 2025/03/27-40

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** the report titled: K-12 School and Community Hub Update, to the Council meeting of March 27, 2025, be received, and
2. **THAT** Staff be directed to return to Council with a comprehensive cost analysis of proposed upgrades to the community theatre and track and field facilities, as well as funding options for the projects.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- The Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board (SMCDSB), is advancing plans for a new K-12 school, which will include shared community facilities such as a theatre and track and field complex.
- The project leverages a \$57.7M funding commitment from the Ministry of Education, with a planned opening of the school in September 2027.
- Staff will return to Council with a detailed cost analysis of proposed upgrades to both the community theatre and track and field facilities, along with potential funding models.

BACKGROUND:

In October 2023, the Town of Wasaga Beach collaborated with the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board (SMCDSB) on their Capital Priority Submission to the Ministry of Education. The SMCDSB's proposed K-12 school, situated east of the new Wasaga Stars Arena and Wasaga Beach Public Library, was ranked as their second-highest priority.

The Ministry of Education was highly impressed by the Board's innovative proposal, which not only included the K-12 school but also envisioned the creation of a community hub in partnership with the Town. This hub would take full advantage of the adjacent \$60M twin-pad arena and library, while creating opportunities for specialized programming in collaboration with Canadore College and Lakehead University. Additionally, the project proposed the establishment of a state-of-the-art community theatre, which would be accessible to students during the school day and available for community use during evenings and weekends. The development would also feature an upgraded

track and field facility which would be owned by the Town of Wasaga Beach and leased to the SMCDSD for daytime school use.

In May 2024, the Ministry of Education announced \$57.7M in funding for the K-12 school. Since then, staff from both the SMCDSD and the Town have worked together to conduct property and municipal reviews, identify programming opportunities, and refine the project's details. The SMCDSD has engaged Salter Pilon Architecture to develop the design concepts, incorporating input from the Town. The K-12 school is expected to open in September 2027.

DISCUSSION:

Building Design:

While still in the design phase, the proposed school will span 122,817 square feet, with space allocations as follows: 75,294 square feet for the secondary school, 42,590 square feet for the elementary school, and 4,933 square feet for a Child Care Centre.

The elementary school program will consist of four kindergarten classrooms and 17 classrooms for grades 1 to 8. The secondary school will feature a variety of program spaces, including standard classrooms, science labs, music and arts rooms, a theatre and drama space, as well as various student success and technology areas. The Child Care Centre will consist of three rooms designed to accommodate infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children. Both the school and Child Care Centre will be fully accessible, meeting all building code requirements and the standards set forth by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

The Town has also entered into partnerships with Lakehead University and Canadore College to offer specialized programming in the school during evenings and school breaks. The school has been designed to include classrooms that are equipped with the necessary electrical and technical infrastructure to support these post-secondary programs.

Theatre Design:

The secondary school will feature a 4,264-square-foot community theatre integrated into the cafeteria space. The SMCDSD's standard design includes basic sound and lighting systems for secondary school use. However, the Town seeks to enhance the theatre's capabilities, creating a high-quality facility for the community. Town staff have initiated collaboration with a theatre consultant and plan to present a comprehensive cost analysis at a future meeting of Council. This analysis will consider upgrades to key elements, such as the sound system, lighting equipment, and retractable cushioned seating, elevating the theatre into a versatile and premier venue for performances and community events.

Field Design:

The SMCDSD's standard for secondary school track and field facilities includes a six-lane clay track. However, this track is not rated by the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA). Moreover, there are no nearby OFSAA-rated tracks, leaving a gap for many schools who bus their students up to two hours away, and pay usage fees to train. The SMCDSD's Standard also includes natural turf. In alignment with the Town's vision to enhance recreational facilities for the community, staff would like to explore upgrades to the track and field complex. Staff will return

with Council with a detailed cost analysis for the construction of a rubberized, eight-lane track, which would be more suitable for competitive events, as well as upgrading to artificial turf. These upgrades would support the school's athletic programming and provide much-needed resources for the broader community.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications for Council to consider at this time. A future report will provide a comprehensive cost analysis of the proposed theatre and track and field upgrades, along with funding options. This will ensure that the community can make the most of these shared spaces, both for school use and public benefit.

Term of Council Priorities:

This report provides an update on the TOCP's #12 to **Explore the Opportunity for a Community Hub Adjacent to the new Arena.**

CONCLUSION:

As the SMCDSS finalizes the design of the new K-12 school, it is crucial for Town Staff to explore all viable options to enhance the planned infrastructure, particularly the community theatre and track and field facilities. By leveraging the SMCDSS's funding, and the resources already available at the Wasaga Stars Arena and Wasaga Beach Public Library, the proposed school can be an integral part of a multi-functional Community Hub that benefits all residents. The upcoming cost analysis will provide a clearer picture of the financial implications and funding strategies for these enhancements.

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Appendices:

N/A