

## **BUDGET COMMITTEE - JANUARY 12, 2009**

### **VELLORE VILLAGE FITNESS CENTRE AND AL PALLADINI FITNESS CENTRE CYCLING AREA**

#### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Community Services, Directors of Building and Facilities, Recreation and Culture and Reserves and Investments, recommend:

- 1) That \$160,000 be added to the 2009 Capital Budget to retain an architect to start the planning exercise to determine the options; and,
- 2) The costs for the preferred option will be included as part of the 2010 Capital budget; and,
- 3) That staff review and analyze the existing cycling area at the Al Palladini Fitness Centre and bring back recommendations as part of the 2010 Capital Budget process.

#### **Economic Impact**

The Active Together Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, Culture & Libraries, includes the requirement for additional growth-related, community space and the associated funding is included in the development charges document. An amount of \$160,000 is required in the 2009 Capital Budget to retain an architect to commence the planning exercise to include a fitness centre at the Vellore Village Community Centre funded \$144,000 from City Wide Development Charges - Recreation and \$16,000 taxation.

#### **Communications Plan**

Council's decision on a fitness centre at the Vellore Village Community Centre will be communicated as required through the City of Vaughan web site, Recreation and Culture Guide, news releases, flyers and posters at community centres. The petitioners will be notified with posted notices at both the Vellore Village and Al Palladini Community Centres.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is respond to Council's direction at the December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008 Council meeting regarding a proposed fitness centre at Vellore Village Community Centre in the context of the Active Together Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, Culture & Libraries and the original plan of Vellore Village Community Centre and, the current status of service delivery and requests received by community services to address the recreational needs of the community.

This report is also responding to a Budget Committee direction to assess the existing cycling area space at the Al Palladini Fitness Centre.

#### **Background - Analysis and Options**

At the Council meeting of December 8, 2008, Council directed that:

- 1) That the City of Vaughan receives the petition from 736 City of Vaughan residents requesting a fitness centre be added to the site at the Vellore Village Community Centre.

- 2) That the City of Vaughan Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with other members of staff, review the request in the context of the Active Together Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, Culture & Libraries.
- 3) That the review include the original plan of Vellore Village Community Centre, the current status of service delivery, and requests received by community services to address the recreational needs of the community, within the context of the Active Together Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, Culture & Libraries.
- 4) That the Commissioner of Community Services bring back a report at the earliest possible Committee of the Whole, no later than January 13, 2009.

At the Budget Committee meeting of December 10, 2008, regarding the Al Palladini Community Centre Bicycling Class Space, the Budget Committee directed:

- 1) That this matter be brought forward when the pending report on the feasibility of building a fitness centre at Vellore Woods, is to be considered.

### **Proposed Fitness Centre at Vellore In the Context of the Active Together Master Plan**

#### Assessment of Need: Fitness Centres

In addition to the need to build new community centres for the new development areas, the Master Plan recommends that it will also be important that existing community centres continue to be kept on par with newer facilities to ensure that existing facilities offer a comparable level of service. Existing community centres may need to be retrofitted or redeveloped to achieve this objective. The retrofitting of the Vellore Village Community Centre with a fitness centre would contribute to this objective. In addition, experience has shown that larger, more complete community centres are better at meeting the needs of the community and are financially more sustainable than multiple sites with single-use facilities.

Municipal fitness centres play an important role in personal health by offering a more inclusive, welcoming and accessible level of service. Residents in Vaughan see the City as a key provider in meeting their fitness needs. In the extensive consultation that took place in the formulation of the Master Plan, both staff and the general public saw the City being in the fitness business as a very desirable activity. The Master Plan recommends that the City continue its role in providing fitness facilities so that residents continue to have a choice of where to engage in their fitness activities.

#### Per Capita Provision

As the population increases and the provision of indoor facilities remains static, the per capita provision increases, thereby reducing the service standard. If the City intends to maintain the existing service standard, additional indoor facilities should be added to the current facility portfolio.

The Active Together Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, Culture & Libraries recommends the "continued provision of full service facilities (with exercise equipment) and that "the City should continue to develop innovative and engaging fitness programming that responds to the needs of the growing and evolving population. The Plan also suggests short-term (2009-2012) growth-related additional program space with the allocation of funding from development charges.

### **Original Plan of the Vellore Village Community Centre**

Vellore Village Community Centre is a major recreation and culture facility located in the City of Vaughan, and has been built and constructed as part of a partnership with York Region District Catholic School Board, with a district park to service the Vellore Village Community. The recreation facilities include two pre-school rooms, five meeting rooms, two swimming pools, a

gymnasium and access to shared use facilities (three gymnasias, cafetorium, art rooms and theatre room). The adjoining school, St. Jean de Brebeuf CHS, possesses a sports conditioning room that is designed for sports team training and physical education classes. It could not be compared to a full-size fitness centre in terms of size, service, or hours of availability.

The original design of the Vellore Village Community Centre included a fitness centre. During the design stage of Vellore, both Maple and Al Palladini Fitness Centre's were being expanded. It was decided to postpone the addition of a fitness centre at Vellore until the impact of the new residents and the expanded centres was known.

The Master Plan notes that the fitness industry has been observed to be growing, largely in response to public awareness of the benefits of physical activity as well as strong competition within the industry itself. Demand for traditional types of aerobic and fitness activities continues to be high.

Demand for additional fitness centres was a fairly high priority for respondents of the Master Plan household survey, ranking seventh among other requests for municipal investment. The City presently offers a range of fitness opportunities including aerobics, cycling "spin" classes, weight training etc. for youth, adults and seniors alike. The "new senior" is also very interested in staying fit and demographic studies show continued growth in this age category.

#### JF Group Report: Proposed Vellore Village Community Fitness Centre

The JF Group commenced study of the feasibility of adding a fitness centre to Vellore Community Centre in 2006.

The report stated that based on the penetration rate of other City run centres, the Vellore community, at the same penetration rate, will contribute between 1,600 and 2,250 people to join the Vellore fitness centre within the next decade.

The report also noted that the population growth in the Vellore area is contributing to overcrowding at Al Palladini Community Centre. Based upon its current membership level, Al Palladini fitness centre is running at approximately 10 square feet per member meaning that Palladini is operating at or near its reasonable capacity. In contrast, Maple Fitness Centre is currently at approximately 20 square feet per member, suggesting a fair level of additional capacity. A postal code analysis revealed that 225 individuals who live in the immediate vicinity of the Vellore Community Centre are fitness members at Al Palladini. This suggests that at least 15% of Al Palladini's current members would likely join a new fitness centre located in Vellore Village, providing the amenities were the same (square footage, selection of equipment, access to pool, etc.). (The transfer of members to the proposed Vellore Village fitness centre would provide needed relief to the Al Palladini fitness centre.) The transfer of members could result in a reduction of \$130,000 in Al Palladini fitness centre revenue.

#### **Current Status Of Service Delivery At Vellore Community Centre**

Since Vellore Village Community Centre opened in 2005, staff have reported on-going requests by residents for a fitness centre, further confirmed by the 736 signature petition. Population growth will result in an increase in the un-served population from within the Vellore Village community.

Further assessment is required, but the existing service delivery may already include some of the additional staff resources needed to facilitate the operation of an expanded recreation facility. Qualified fitness staff would need to be hired to offer the programs and services available at the other fitness centres.

It is currently unknown if a fitness centre can fit within the existing Vellore Village Community Centre building envelope, or if building expansion is required and to do a preliminary design. The approval of \$160,000 to retain an architect will determine this.

### **Al Palladini Fitness Centre Cycling Space**

As a further indication of the need for additional fitness facilities, in the report of Councillor Carella, dated October 6, 2008, an attached petition, signed by approximately one hundred and seventy (170) residents, requested improved, dedicated space for cycling classes at the Al Palladini Community Centre. The cycling room at Maple Community Centre is 800 square feet and 700 square feet at Garnet A. Williams Community Centre. The space allocated for cycling at Al Palladini is only 300 square feet. The expansion of Al Palladini did not include a cycling room. It was the first such expansion. With cycling classes being fairly new, the concept was not considered until the Maple and Garnet expansions.

The current space allocated for cycling will be reviewed and analyzed to ensure it is compatible with the service standards at our centres and continues to meet the growing needs. If it is determined that additional space through some minor renovations is needed, recommendations will be included as part of the 2010 Capital Budget submission.

### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan**

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, the report will provide:  
STRATEGIC GOAL: Service Excellence

- Excellence in Service Delivery; Enhance and Ensure
- Community Safety, Health & Wellness.

This report does not recommend a change from the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated.

### **Regional Implications**

N/A

### **Conclusion**

The proposed addition of a fitness centre to the Vellore Village Community Centre is supported, in principle, by the "Active Together Master Plan" and the "JF Group Report: Proposed Vellore Village Community Fitness Centre".

The Master Plan notes that existing community centres may need to be retrofitted or redeveloped to achieve the objective of keeping existing community centres on par with newer facilities, which ensures that existing facilities offer a comparable level of service. Additionally, larger, more complete community centres are better at meeting the needs of the community and are financially more sustainable than multiple sites with single-use facilities

The JF Group noted that Al Palladini Fitness Centre is near capacity and can no longer support the continued demand for fitness facilities in the Vellore area, which is estimated to be as high as 2,250 people.

Providing additional fitness facilities not only meets residents demands, but fitness centres play an important role in personal health by offering a more inclusive, welcoming and accessible level

of service and contribute to the well-being of society through the provision of opportunities for physical activity.

An amount of \$160,000 is required in the 2009 Capital Budget to retain an architect to commence the planning exercise to include a fitness centre at the Vellore Village Community Centre funded \$144,000 from City Wide Development Charges - Recreation and \$16,000 taxation.

The review of the Al Palladini cycling space will ensure we continue to meet established service standards.

**Attachments**

None.

**Report Prepared By**

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Respectfully submitted,

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Commissioner of Community Services