



City of Hamilton Report for Information

To: Chair and Members
Emergency and Community Services Committee

Date: March 20, 2025

Report No: HSC25023

Subject/Title: Eastwood Arena Ice Plant Decommissioning

Ward(s) Affected: Ward 2

Recommendations

- 1) That Report HSC25023 respecting Eastwood Arena Ice Plant Decommissioning **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Key Facts

- The purpose of Report HSC25023 is to provide an update on the status of the ice plant at the Eastwood Arena and identify next steps for the facility.
- Eastwood Arena was identified in the Recreation Master Plan for decommission of the ice plant in the short-term with consideration to redevelop for floor-based activity to align ice supply with community demand and realize cost efficiencies.
- The Recreation Master Plan identifies several recreation facilities that have been recommended for replacement, redevelopment, renewal, or removal. The list is attached as Appendix "A" to Report HSC25023 identifies five arenas, including Eastwood Arena.
- The arena provision model of the Recreation Master Plan recommends strategic conversion of a small number of under-utilized single pad arenas to make the best use of our assets and transform them into facilities that can serve other purposes.
- The Recreation Master Plan Implementation Strategy will address indoor Recreation facility needs and investments, including a funding model and prioritization framework for consideration to be presented to the Emergency and Community Services Committee in Q2 2025.

- The Recreation Master Plan Implementation Strategy will enable a thoughtful approach to facility investment from a holistic perspective that accounts for community need, activity focus, facility condition, equity lens and financial investment required (regardless of corporate or ward funding sources).

Financial Considerations

Ice demand and program participation at the Eastwood Arena have steadily declined, with the recommendation to decommission the site made in the 2022 Recreation Master Plan. Ice installation at the Eastwood Arena was discontinued in 2022, resulting in annual operating budget savings of approximately \$116 K in both 2022 and 2023. In response to the decline in ice usage, rental requests for floor sports, including roller derby, lacrosse, and ball hockey, have increased. These activities generated new revenue of \$13 K in 2022 and \$59 K in 2023, with growing interest in the facility for other community-based floor sport rentals and a budgeted revenue expectation of \$70K in 2025.

To continue meeting the demand for floor sports in a climate-controlled environment, necessary cosmetic, structural, and mechanical improvements are required at the Eastwood Arena site. Facility asset management needs for this facility and others will be brought forward as part of the in-year Capital budget process for consideration based on prioritization as identified in the anticipated Recreation Master Plan Implementation Strategy, which will come forward in Q2, 2025.

Background

Eastwood Arena, built in 1959 (66 years ago), is located at 111 Burlington Street East in Hamilton. As an aging facility originally designed for winter ice operations, the arena's ice plant last received a major investment in 1986. According to the 2023 Building Condition Assessment Report, the ice plant was overdue for replacement, with key components having exceeded or reached the end of their expected lifespan.

Prior to decommissioning, the Eastwood Arena ice plant operated using R22 refrigerant (commonly known as Freon). Due to its harmful impact on the ozone layer, R22 was phased out in Canada as of January 1, 2020, and is no longer permitted for import or production. As a result, the cost of R22 has become highly variable, influenced by the limited availability and high demand across North America. The estimated cost to supply the Eastwood system with R22 for a single ice season ranges from \$45,000 to \$90,000. In 2023, the ice plant at Eastwood Arena was permanently decommissioned, with measures taken to comply with Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA) requirements to isolate the system and prevent future use. Recent investigation of the low-emissivity (low-E) ceiling has resulted in a temporary closure of the facility as staff engage a building engineer to complete a comprehensive condition assessment of the roof and identify next actions. At present, staff do not know the extent of intervention needed for the roof; however, this will need to be factored into future facility discussion.

The Recreation Master Plan recommends that some existing facilities, such as Eastwood Arena, be decommissioned and repurposed as they reach the end of their

useful life, or the City may cease providing them in certain locations. In such cases, site-specific analyses will be necessary to assess opportunities for facility investment, conversion, or closure.

Analysis

The decommissioning of the ice plant positions Eastwood Arena as a strong candidate for the strategic conversion of underutilized single-pad arenas to floor-based activity, maximizing the value of the asset and repurposing it for alternative uses. However, the facility requires significant investment to maintain its viability and ensure continued access for sporting activities. The existing foundation and superstructure are original to the building and are in poor condition, while much of the exterior and interior finishes are in fair condition.

The Recreation Master Plan Implementation Strategy aims to create a comprehensive roadmap for executing recommendations related to the City's recreation facility investments, as outlined in the Recreation Master Plan. The recommendations are based on extensive community consultation and align with the needs and opportunities currently facing our City. The implementation strategy, coming forward to Committee in Q2, 2025 will provide a clear framework for prioritizing and evaluating potential projects, including a framework for community collaboration that will enable the City to work with community groups and organizations that endeavour to improve the services and programs currently offered to our residents. Eastwood Arena will be reviewed and prioritized as part of this process.

The timeline for assessing amenity removal will depend on factors such as site-specific analysis, capital projects, development initiatives, and other strategic municipal efforts. Given the complexity of our recreation assets across the City and the potential risks of prioritizing one facility over another without a comprehensive review, Recreation staff are reluctant to advance the timeline for any single facility ahead of the upcoming discussion. However, staff recognize that in some cases, community interest and available resources may influence alternative approaches and will defer to council direction.

Legal Implications – N/A

Corporate Policy Implications – N/A

Staffing Considerations – N/A

Alternatives

Once significant roof issues are addressed, short term, strategic investments could enhance the efficiency of the Eastwood Arena facility for existing users. These include the following items with provisional cost estimates:

- **Accessibility upgrades** to provide ramp access to the floor surface. (\$25 K)
- **Cosmetic refresh** of common areas, change rooms, and washrooms, including fixture replacements. (\$80 K)

- **Enhancement of portable sport flooring** on the concrete pad. (\$100 K-\$200 K)
- **HVAC improvements** to ensure better environmental control. (\$1 M)

Should funding be confirmed for short term enhancements to the facility, staff will collaborate with Procurement to determine the most suitable procurement method, inviting community input on programming. If these enhancements proceed, Recreation staff will promptly engage with the community to identify opportunities that align with the framework for collaboration. A call for proposals would be issued, and the criteria for evaluating submissions will be shared with all interested parties.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The decommissioning of the Eastwood Arena ice plant has led to a reduction in operating expenses and the generation of new revenue streams. The availability of alternative community sport spaces has provided benefits to the local community, while ice users continue to utilize nearby arenas. Ongoing communication and engagement with the community regarding the potential future use of the site and others recommended for renewal, replacement and redevelopment in the Recreation Master Plan fosters transparency and helps create vibrant public spaces.

Priority 1: Sustainable Economic & Ecological Development

Outcome 1: Reduce the burden on residential taxpayers.

Priority 2: Safe & Thriving Neighbourhoods

Outcome 3: Provide vibrant parks, recreation, and public space.

Priority 3: Responsiveness & Transparency

Outcome 1: Prioritize customer service and proactive communication.

Previous Reports Submitted

[HSC24043 Recreation Master Plan Implementation Strategy Update.pdf](#)

[HSC22014\(b\) Recreation Master Plan Final Report and Recommendations.pdf](#)

Consultation

Jeff Drummond, Superintendent-Facilities Operations and Maintenance, Public Works
Beth Wheaton, Business Administrator-Finance & Administration, Corporate Services

Appendices and Schedules Attached

Appendix A: Recreation Facilities Identified for Renewal, Replacement, Redevelopment or Removal

Prepared by: Dawn Walton, Manager-Business Support
Healthy & Safe Communities, Recreation

**Submitted and
recommended by:** Steve Sevor, Director (Acting)
Healthy & Safe Communities, Recreation