

Staff Report

Community Services Department



www.kitchener.ca

REPORT TO: Council Strategy Session

DATE OF MEETING: May 26, 2025

SUBMITTED BY: Michael May, DCAO & GM of Community Services

PREPARED BY: Elin Moorlag, Manager, Service Coordination & Improvement

WARD(S) INVOLVED: All Wards

DATE OF REPORT: May 22, 2025

REPORT NO.: CSD-2025-237

SUBJECT: Kitchener Indoor Recreation Complex: Design & Operational Update

RECOMMENDATION:

For information.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive update to City Council regarding: (1) the design and construction of the Kitchener Indoor Recreation Complex (KIRC), and (2) the operational readiness work being done to ensure the facility is ready to open and operate effectively once construction is complete.
- Once complete, this facility will be Kitchener's premier indoor recreation destination, providing a diverse selection of recreational opportunities for residents, with an aquatics centre with two pools, an indoor turf built to FIFA recommended standards, two cricket practice nets, a walking track, a quad gymnasium, multi-purpose rooms for community use and dedicated team change rooms.
- Construction on this indoor recreation facility began in May of 2024, and has been tracking on time and on budget through the innovative Integrated Project Delivery (IPD) model, which is highly structured with built-in metrics to increase accountability, predictability, productivity, and to remove waste.
Once the facility is open, more than 570,000 visits are anticipated per year, including more than 100,000 event-related visitors (eh. out-of-town visitors, spectators and coaches)
- In recent months significant staff effort has been focused on user experience and operational readiness to ensure the facility adequately meets the needs of the core user groups while also being accommodating and welcoming to all members of the community. Major bodies of work focused on ensuring the City is operationally ready to open the facility include (but are not limited to) development of the staffing model, vision statement, operational and capital budget projections, and sponsorship strategy.

*** This information is available in accessible formats upon request. ***
Please call 519-741-2345 or TTY 1-866-969-9994 for assistance.

BACKGROUND:

Kitchener Indoor Recreation Complex (KIRC) at Schlegel Park

In 2019, the City's Leisure Facilities Master Plan prioritized a new aquatic centre and indoor turf facility as the City's **top two priorities** for indoor recreation, which was informed by a comprehensive review of facility use and demand, extensive community engagement, and projections of future growth based on Kitchener's population trends.

After releasing a Request for Proposal, in January 2023, for a design and construction team and after completing a rigorous procurement evaluation process, in August 2023, the City entered into a multi-party legal agreement with the successful IPD project team. Since that time, the comprehensive design, costing, and construction of KIRC have been undertaken. The facility now includes:

- An aquatics centre with 2 pools, with a second floor viewing area
- A FIFA standard size turf fieldhouse (which can be divided into 4)
- An elevated walking track around the outside perimeter of the turf field
- An indoor cricket batting cage
- A quad gymnasium with the ability to sub-divide into four courts

Once built, this indoor recreation facility will be the City's first ever net-zero carbon building and one of the most environmentally sustainable recreation facilities in Canada.

In February of this year City Council endorsed a plan to proceed with phase one of a two-phased approach to the addition of a quad gymnasium. This phased approach is intended to provide more time for the federal and provincial governments to respond to two significant grant applications from the City to help fund the gymnasium. In March of 2025 the City learned it is receiving \$2 million from the Government of Canada's *Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Fund* to help fund phase two of the gymnasium. Staff are currently waiting for a response from the province of Ontario regarding the City's grant application for gym funding.

REPORT:

In addition to completing design and construction of the facility, in recent months staff have also begun to focus on completing a large and complex body of work intended to ensure the City is operationally ready to open the facility next year. This work is currently focused on 17 operational priorities encompassing more than 100 activities and projects. The following chart summarizes a number of projects the operational readiness team are actively working on:

Operational Readiness

KIRC Vision Statement	Create a facility vision statement to guide future operational decisions, as well as staff recruitment, onboarding and training. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete and approved (See Appendix A)• Next: create shorter public version of the vision statement
Staffing model	Create a staffing model that will ensure a positive user experience at the facility once it opens. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guiding principles complete, staffing model complete, financial analysis of staffing model complete, drafting staff report to council

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next: June 16 – staff report to council for endorsement of staffing model
Operating & Capital Budget	<p>Build an operating budget and 10-year capital forecast for Council's consideration as part of the 2026 budget process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working group established, initial facility usage, user fees and revenue projections complete, creation of detailed operating and capital budget progressing well • Next: user groups engagement re: user fees, refinement of revenue projections, finalization of operating costs (non-staffing related)
Sponsorship	<p>Sell sponsorships (including naming rights) for facility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant on board, valuation of assets in progress. • Next: begin to approach prospective sponsors
Programming Strategy	<p>Identify programming strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop to finalize strategy and high-level allocation priorities, revenue projections complete
Allocation Policy/Guidelines	<p>Create allocation process (to be extended to other facilities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop to finalize priorities complete • Next: finalize allocation policy
Concession and Vending	<p>Secure concession partner and procure vending/coffee machines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guiding principles for concession experience approved, RFI issued to find a concession partner • Next: review RFI submissions
Technology Strategy	<p>Create strategy that will address procurement, installation and use of technology to facilitate a positive user experience in the facility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priorities identified, inventory underway, guiding principles drafted • Next: finalize strategy which will drive next steps
Inventory (non-furnishing items)	<p>Identify, purchase and store all non-furnishing items.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing initial lists • Next: source/procure items, short-term and perm. storage/move-in plans
Staff and public opening strategy	<p>Detailed schedule for opening of facility to staff and public.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workback started • Next: ensure commissioning plan is in place
Digital roadside signage	<p>Design digital roadside sign on Fischer-Hallman.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next: design, cost, funding.
Public Art	<p>Currently in the final stages of selection for public art commission for the facility, to be brought to Council for approval in June 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next: several other locations throughout, and around, the facility are being considered for additional opportunities to integrate art into the facility.
Local Athlete Showcase	<p>A hallway will be dedicated to profiling local athletes, showcasing sports played at KIRC, which will include digital displays, space to display jerseys, medals and other memorabilia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next: Create selection criteria team to oversee this process

SOPs	Reviewing current SOPs for the operations of maintenance (in collaboration with INS) at the facility as well as emergency plans. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next: create a list of SOPs that need to be updated and created
-------------	--

Construction Update (as of May 21, 2025)

Construction on KIRC is progressing well across all areas of the new indoor recreation complex. Highlighted below are recent milestones and upcoming work as the team moves into a busy season on site.

Quad Gym

- Foundations and footings underway

Aquatics Centre

- Stainless steel pool walls installed; welding underway
- Leisure pool slab to be poured week of May 26
- Steel stud framing continues in aquatics and multipurpose areas
- Roof is 50% complete

Atrium & Multipurpose Rooms

- Underground plumbing and electrical ongoing

Field House

- Steel structure ongoing; 12 of 18 roof trusses installed
- Roof deck 30% complete
- Walking track deck 25% complete

Site Works

- Curbs complete for all new parking areas
- Asphalt and sidewalks to be finished by early June

User Experience

Staff will guide members of Council through a virtual tour of the facility, focusing on four key areas of user experience, summarized below.

Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main entrances, change rooms, pools, gyms, and fieldhouse have been designed with barrier-free access, exceeding Ontario Building Code minimums. • Accessible viewing areas provided in all major program spaces, including pool decks, gymnasiums, and spectator viewing areas. • Continuous interior circulation paths are wide and free of obstructions to support mobility devices and strollers. • Universal washrooms and inclusive change spaces are strategically distributed to serve all user types and needs • This will be the City's most accessible facility
Scale of Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The updated model reflects the full height and volume of all program spaces, providing a more accurate understanding of the building's overall scale.

Spectator Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded and strategically placed spectator zones for all major program areas (fieldhouse, gyms, pools), supporting both everyday viewing and tournament-level events. Spectator access routes are clearly delineated from participant zones to minimize congestion and improve the experience for both user groups. Opportunities for informal viewing, including perimeter seating and social nodes, have been incorporated throughout.
Interconnected Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear interior sightlines and intuitive wayfinding between major zones (aquatics, fieldhouse, gymnasiums, multipurpose rooms) promote seamless user movement. The central spine and multi-level lobby space effectively anchor the layout, linking programming spaces seamlessly. Shared amenities such as washrooms, viewing areas, and concession are located at intersections of key program spaces to serve multiple user groups simultaneously. The updated model emphasizes the facility's ability to support concurrent multi-sport events, community gatherings, and daily recreation through thoughtful connectivity.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report supports *Fostering a Caring City Together*: Focuses on welcoming residents of all ages, backgrounds & experiences; residents working on decisions with a meaningful influence; healthy, thriving residents with easy access to diverse & inclusive programs & services.

This report supports *Cultivating a Green City Together*: Focuses a sustainable path to a greener, healthier city; enhancing & protecting parks & natural environment while transitioning to a low-carbon future; supporting businesses & residents to make climate-positive choices.

This report supports the delivery of core services.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no financial implications arising from this report

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

INFORM – This report has been posted to the City's website with the agenda in advance of the council / committee meeting.

CONSULT and COLLABORATE - Throughout the design and construction phase of the project we have continued to engage with key user groups in the region, including but not limited to soccer, cricket, basketball, volleyball, pickleball, and multi-sport organizations, all of which have demonstrated strong enthusiasm and support for the opening of this facility.

PREVIOUS REPORTS/AUTHORITIES:

- CSD-2025-044 Kitchener Indoor Recreation Facility – Gymnasium Update
- FIN-2024-411 Applications to CSRIF and GICB Fund – KIRC Gymnasium
- INS-2024-142 Kitchener Indoor Recreation Facility – Sustainability Features

- INS-2024-126 Kitchener Indoor Recreation Complex – Target Cost & Design Update
- INS-2022-218 – Indoor Recreation Complex at RBJ Schlegel Park Business Case
- CSD-19-007 – 2019 Leisure Facilities Master Plan

APPROVED BY: Michael May, DCAO

APPENDIX A – Kitchener Indoor Recreation Complex – Facility Vision Statement