

# Staff Report for Decision

DATE OF MEETING MAY 21st, 2025

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SUBJECT NANAIMO CURLING CLUB ASSESSMENT

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To provide an updated assessment of the condition of the Nanaimo Curling Club. |

### **Recommendation**

That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to prioritize necessary funds to sustain services at the facility including a new roof and suitable surface to support ice, while investigating additional programming for the facility.

## **BACKGROUND**

At the 2024-JUN-19 Finance and Audit Committee Meeting, Council directed Staff to conduct a condition assessment of the Nanaimo Curling Club (Curling Club) to determine its present condition and any significant remediation required to maintain service levels and facilitate the continued viability of the facility.

The Curling Club was constructed in 1964 and operates under a Co-Management Agreement (Agreement) with the City of Nanaimo. Through this Agreement each party is responsible for various portions of the facility's assets. Two of the largest responsibilities at this facility for the City are the structure, including the roof and other building envelope elements, and the concrete slab under the ice which the holds the brine lines used to build and maintain an ice sheet.

The Curling Club has a membership of approximately 460 members as of 2023.

In July, 2022, a comprehensive condition assessment was completed at the facility. In January, 2025 a specific structural assessment was completed, which incorporated the known issues and aimed to identify new ones.

In addition to these reviews, Staff have also been monitoring the roof membrane and the concrete slab below the ice as these are the two known areas of concern intrinsic to service delivery as an ice facility.

## **DISCUSSION**

The 2025 structural assessment determined the structure of the facility to be in overall satisfactory condition. The small through-wall cracks in the northeast walls that have been monitored by facility staff after being identified in a report in 2015 have not changed, suggesting the structure is stable.

The report does identify some marginally overstressed structural elements, which should be dealt with if any significant renovations or upgrades are undertaken.

The roof membrane was installed in 1992 and has surpassed its expected service life of 22 years and requires replacement. Budget for this replacement is approximately \$2.4 million and should be replaced in the immediate to near term. While the roof is 11 years past its expected service life, patching can continue for the immediate future; however, each leak allows water to enter the structure causing damage and the potential for hidden risks that could severely impact the structure. A roof is critical to the function of interior space and structural soundness regardless of the activity taking place. At the time of writing this report, it was not possible to access the underside of the roof structure from a lift due to the presence of the ice sheet. The ice has since been removed and a comprehensive review of the underside of the roof structure is planned in the near term to further inform the condition.

The concrete slab used to support the curling ice has several surface cracks. Additionally, it has a two-inch slope from one side to the other. Given that the ice must be level to curl, staff must maintain two extra inches of ice on the low side of the slab. This causes an increased load on the refrigeration plant, resulting in higher energy costs. There is one known, active leak in the brine lines that run within the slab. The leak is being monitored and managed by facility staff allowing the ice to be maintained and mitigating the possibility of increased brine loss. The temporary nature of the repair, however, means that eventual replacement of the brine lines will be required.

The slab and brine lines could be replaced with a new sand surface or replaced with a similar concrete slab. These two options for the slab replacement range in budget from \$1 million to \$3 million respectively. Should the less expensive sand pad be chosen, this would limit the usage to ice usage only. Alternately, a new concrete slab could be installed, allowing not only ice-based uses, but more versatile use of the dry-floor space for a myriad of indoor activities (dry floor sports, trade shows, etc.).

The roof renewal and slab replacement do not need to happen simultaneously. Maintaining of the roof ensures maintaining the structure and integrity as an indoor facility. Maintaining the concrete slab (or changing to a sand pad) with brine lines ensures the ability to build an ice surface.

Each year, the project plan is prioritized across all funding needs of the City. To date, other more pressing obligations and community needs have prevented these renewals from moving forward into the 5-year financial plan. While there is always demand for additional ice and indoor recreation space in the City, expanding the uses has not been explored. With the size and needs of the facility portfolio alone, there may always be more pressing priorities if the usage remains primarily for curling.

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Over the last five years, the City has spent approximately \$175,000 sustaining the facility. Annual costs incurred by the City are in the order of \$10,000-\$12,000, primarily for electricity used at the facility. In 2024 approx. \$35,000 was invested in the boiler system, and an additional almost \$68,000 in grant funds for the chiller repair. Thus far in 2025, approximately \$21,000 has been invested in the HVAC system. Based on the condition assessment and future forecast renewals, additional investment of the order of \$4 million to \$5.5 million is anticipated in the next few years.

A high-level cost projection for a new ice facility would be in the order of \$40 million assuming similar size and complexity

## **OPTIONS**

1. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to prioritize necessary funds to sustain services at the Curling Club including a new roof and suitable surface to support ice, while investigating additional programming for the facility.
  - a. The advantage of this option is the continued sustainment of this facility for curling and other uses, benefitting the community.
  - b. The disadvantage of this option is that it will reduce resources available for other priorities of the City that may benefit a wider range of the community.
  - c. The financial implications of this option are in the order of \$4 million to \$5.5 million investment over the next 5-7 years. Any project will be included in 5-year financial plan and follow the same process as other capital projects.
2. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to mitigate deterioration while alternate solutions for users are investigated.
  - a. The impact of this option is the diminished worth of the facility, and eventual migration of services to alternate locations.
3. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council provide alternative direction to Staff.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Nanaimo Curling Club provides much-needed ice space for the community however requires significant investment to sustain the current services.

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- The Nanaimo Curling Club was constructed in 1964 and the club had a membership of around 460 as of 2023.
- A 2025 structural condition assessment of the Nanaimo Curling Club has found that investment in the order of \$4 Million to \$5.5 Million over the next 5-7 years is required to sustain operations as a curling facility.
- The recommendation is to direct staff to begin to prioritize necessary funds to sustain services by placing required projects within the 5 year financial plan.

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