

Transcona Views June Edition - Cover Page Story

By Councillor Russ Wyatt

A New Vision for Indoor Recreation in Transcona

After speaking with many residents, there clearly is a need and desire for a new indoor recreational facility in Transcona. An indoor walking/running track, gymnasium/work out room with equipment and newer pool, change rooms, indoor playground and climbing wall are just some of the ideas I have heard about. I believe there is also an opportunity here to build housing for seniors or youth and in a future phase, provide space for a new public library. The working title of this project is the Transcona Recreation and Leisure Village (TRLV), and the site is the Roland Michener Arena/Transcona Stadium/Centennial Pool site.

To that end, for the last five months I have been working with city staff to secure funding to pay for a process that would write this plan. This process would involve conducting public consultations, developing a concept and business plan which would cost out such a project, identify sources of funding and potential not-for-profit operating models which could then be presented to City Council. I am happy to now report that funds to write the plan are now in place, and starting this month (June), public consultations will begin.

No designs have been done, however an opportunity exists to convert the Roland Michener Arena into an indoor recreation centre. The existing arena requires a new ice plant in the near future, and the City, in an attempt to combine with community clubs, has identified Park City West Community Club as a future indoor ice site. I have been working with the community club and helped them secure funding to write their business plan.

Furthermore, with the development of the Buhler Recreation Park (BRP), the community has now eight new softball diamonds, one new hardball diamond (with room for a second hardball diamond), and four soccer fields (with room for two more). The BRP is run by the community, with all funds derived by the park staying in the park for maintenance and upkeep. The existence of the BRP creates potential space at the Michener site for housing (which would help fund the development of the recreation centre), and for a new indoor pool, new public library, and supportive on-site parking.

Again, public input will play a central role in the development of the Transcona Recreation and Leisure Village. I understand that this does represent change, and change is sometimes resisted or opposed. I want to stress that we are just at the beginning of this process, and no concrete plans have been written or costed out yet. It should be stated that this is no small task and the plan itself will probably take 9 to 10 months. For it to proceed, it will need community input and a demonstration of community support. Your ideas and energy will be crucial, both in the planning, implementation, and fundraising stages. The TRLV won't be built over night, but we must begin somewhere and this is it. Please stay posted for more information on the coming public consultations.