

Report to Council



Date: April 15, 2024
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: Okanagan Mission (Sarsons) Activity Centre
Department: Parks and Buildings Planning

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, this report from Parks and Buildings Planning dated April 15, 2024, with respect to the future use of the facility currently named Okanagan Mission Activity Centre.

AND THAT Council confirms the facility will continue as an activity centre for use by the community for the foreseeable future, and under the name of Sarsons Activity Centre.

Purpose:

To confirm the City's long-term intent for the Okanagan Mission Activity Centre at Sarsons Beach Park.

Background:

The Okanagan Mission Activity Centre (OKMAC) at 4398 Hobson Road was acquired by the City in 1979. OKMAC is located within Sarsons Beach Park, on Kelowna's waterfront, and surrounded by mature trees and grass lawn. The building serves as a multi-use facility and has been operated by the City in collaboration with the Okanagan Mission Seniors Centre Society (OMSCS) for over five decades. OMSCS run a variety of programs during weekdays. During weekends and evenings, OKMAC is utilized for community recreation, programs, and rentals.

Use and operation:

In 2023 OKMAC received 12,660 visits, and OMSCS has over 350 members. Many facility users travel from far beyond the Mission area to attend programs, meetings and events offered at the space due to its' unique charm. The welcoming nature of the facility with large, waterfront-facing windows overlooking the park makes the centre popular with many clubs, rentals and activities including painting, singing, practicing yoga and hosting small events including weddings, cultural celebrations, birthday parties and art shows.

OMSCS is the main user of the facility Monday to Friday, during daytime hours. The society offers a variety of programs for their members including card games, fitness classes, language programs and other social activities. A service agreement is in place between the City and the Society which outlines the Society's usage of the facility and operating conditions. The Society does not pay a rental fee for the use of the space, nor responsible for the maintenance of the building, in return they are providing a valuable service of seniors programming to the community. Outside of the Society's program hours, the City utilizes the space to offer community programs and rentals.

Park setting:

As the nearest beach park to a large proportion of both Upper and Lower Mission, Sarsons is a popular family beach park. In 2020 some landscaping changes more than doubled the grass area available for park users. Parking was also revised, so OKMAC parking could be shared with park users when not in use.

The 'eyes and ears' afforded on the park by a full schedule of programming in the centre throughout the years has resulted in fewer occurrences of vandalism or other issues in the park. This community ownership of the park is therefore a valuable benefit to our park operations.

Building condition:

Originally built as a residential bungalow nearly seventy-five years ago, many of the building components appear to be original. A full Building Condition Assessment was undertaken by a third party in February 2024. There are numerous deficiencies throughout the building. Subject to Council approval of this recommendation, replacement of the roof is the highest priority, scheduled for spring 2024.

Engagement:

Upon learning about the City's vision for a new all-ages activity centre at Mission Recreation Park through the 10-year Capital Plan in 2019, OMSCS members have expressed both concerns and aspirations for the future of the aging facility. Staff have met regularly with OMSCS throughout this time to advise that no decision on the future of the building would be made until after the Mission Activity Centre (MAC) public engagement in late 2023. However, there has remained a persistent fear that the demolition of the facility was already predetermined.

During community engagement in late 2023 for the new MAC, staff arranged an engagement session in November 2023 specific to OKMAC to help clarify plans and intent for the existing facility. Over 100 residents attended.

The focus of the City's presentation was specific to highlighting the larger scope of active facility infrastructure plans in the Mission area, how the Building a Stronger Kelowna initiative fits in, and steps to be taken as staff form a recommendation specific to the future of OKMAC at Sarsons Beach Park. Refer to Attachment 1 for the complete Engagement Summary.

Financial details:

The facility generates approximately \$10k per annum in net revenue through programs and rentals, after programming costs have been deducted. Total Operating and Maintenance costs are on average \$35k per annum. This includes utility, maintenance and janitorial costs.

The current operating and maintenance costs are partially offset by the program and rental revenues.

Renewal costs have been estimated based on the Building Condition Assessment. \$180k has been identified for the most pressing elements, including \$50k for the proposed roof replacement in 2024. Additional costs over the following ten year period could add a further \$740k. It should be noted members of OMSCS have offered on several occasions to fundraise and pursue grants to assist with the renewal costs for the building.

Deterring vandalism and other issues within the park is a tangible cost benefit to the City, however very difficult to quantify without making some major assumptions.

Conclusion:

The new MAC is to be a multi-generational facility to meet the demands of our growing community. By retaining the OKMAC space, programming at Sarsons can complement the programming at MAC and thereby increase the diversity of programs and user groups served. Retaining OKMAC also provides year-round community oversight of Sarsons Beach Park.

The current operating and maintenance costs are partially offset by the program and rental revenues. Approximately \$180k of renewal costs are anticipated in the near future.

Most significantly, the facility serves a lot of people, and is clearly very dear to the group of residents who use it regularly. The waterfront location makes it attractive to many different users and provides a unique and welcoming space for gatherings.

In consideration of these factors, staff are recommending OKMAC remain in use as a community space for the foreseeable future.

Finally, staff propose the current name of Okanagan Mission Activity Centre be renamed as Sarsons Activity Centre matching the name of the park, to better meet existing naming policy and good wayfinding principles. This correlates with the names of other existing activity centres at Parkinson and Rutland, and avoids any confusion with the working title for the proposed Mission Activity Centre. OMSCS have indicated they are in support of this change.

Internal Circulation:

Active Living & Culture
Building Services
Park Operations
Community Communications
Finance

Partnerships Office
Policy and Planning

Considerations applicable to this report:

Existing Policy:

Civic Community Naming - Policy No. 343

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

Refer to Financial details above.

Communications Comments:

Refer to Engagement summary above.

External Agency/Public Comments:

Refer to Engagement summary above.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Legal/Statutory Authority

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements

External Agency/Public Comments

Submitted by: R. Parlane, Parks and Buildings Planning Manager

Approved for inclusion: D. Edstrom, Divisional Director, Partnerships & Investments

Attachment 1 Engagement Summary

Attachment 2 Presentation

cc:

J. Gabriel, Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture