

Priorities Committee Meeting_Apr22_2025**STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND UPDATE**

Indoor gymnasium multi-sport court review**Report Purpose**

To review indoor gymnasium and multi-sport court spaces within County facilities to identify unmet demand for these spaces, where the greatest space deficiencies exist and offer strategies that could be implemented to mitigate any unmet needs.

Our Strategic Goals

Goal 2 - Healthy and Safe Community

Goal 3 - Responsible Development

Goal 4 - Municipal Excellence

Goal 2 Priority - A diverse, welcoming, inclusive, and an accessible community for all

Goal 3 Priority - Growth and development that prioritizes community well-being and economic benefits

Goal 4 Priority - Optimal use of resources that meets the community's needs

Report

Strathcona County offers a variety of indoor gymnasium and multi-sport court spaces to meet the needs of our community including:

- Millennium Place - gymnasium
- École Père Kenneth Kearns - gymnasium (evenings/weekends)
- Ardrossan Recreation Complex - hall
- Moyer Recreation Centre - hall
- Glen Allan Recreation Complex – curling dry surface (April -August)

Other dry surface spaces in arenas are not included in this report as the focus is on spaces that offer lined courts like gymnasium spaces.

Community need

There is a proven need for an increase in the provision of gymnasiums and multi-sport courts in Strathcona County. According to the most recent engagement to inform the 2024-2026 Implementation Plan for the Recreation and Culture Strategy, indoor fields were identified as the number one priority, followed by gymnasiums in third place and multi-sport surfaces in fourth. This need was determined based on utilization data and community feedback reflected in both the 2018 and 2023 "What We Heard" reports. This combined with the provision of infrastructure benchmarked with like communities show Strathcona County is at a deficit compared to other Alberta municipalities of similar size. For example, the average quantity of gymnasiums in like communities is six compared to only two in Strathcona County.

Utilization

Current spaces are used in three ways – through spontaneous use for drop-in activities, bookings (casual or block bookings), and registered for programs.

Spontaneous use activities include badminton, basketball, pickleball, floor hockey, fitness programs and more. These activities are administered through daily admissions and Active

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Pass memberships. Admissions at Millennium Place, Ardrossan Recreation Complex and Glen Allan Recreation Complex have increased by five per cent in 2024 and continue to trend upwards of three per cent in 2025. Memberships are also on the rise with an average 13 per cent increase in 2024 and trending an additional seven per cent in 2025.

Millennium Place averages 40 to 70 users during peak times for a variety of drop-in sports. Bookings are also available for one-quarter section of gym for groups such as ball hockey, schools, youth basketball, floor hockey, social badminton and birthday parties.

Bookings are created seasonally for County run programs, minor sport groups, adult sport groups and casual bookings at École Père Kenneth Kearns gymnasium. With consistent growth since opening in 2022, Recreation programs have increased booked time by 11 per cent in 2024 with an 81 per cent fill rate for program registration. The County further worked with Elk Island Catholic Schools to expand access to Sundays to help met unmet demand, which has resulted in a 43 per cent increase in bookings consistently filling both Saturday and Sunday.

Drop-in pickleball averages of 73 hours per week of indoor play offered through fall, winter and spring at three indoor facility locations. Birthday party bookings are also popular at all locations accounting for the most time booked at Glen Allan. Drop-in use at Glen Allan ranges from four to 28 users at a given time for court sports and inflatable fun.

Social events make up 60 per cent of the bookings in the rural halls at Moyer and Ardrossan and the other 30 per cent is used for recreation activities.

Unmet demand

To manage a wide range of needs, bookings are limited to sections of the gymnasiums and dry surface spaces at limited times and are typically booked by one-quarter section. Overall, the County is unable to accommodate requests for the entire gymnasium or full-day bookings for tournaments and events at any location, especially on weekends. There is also an increase in demand for shoulder season bookings that overlap with winter activities.

Space deficiencies

A key challenge involves access to gymnasiums during the winter season. The halls and dry surface spaces within recreation facilities help to relieve some pressure during the off-season, which are ideal for activities that require minimal specialized gymnasium infrastructure and equipment as well as provide a rural offering.

Several deficiencies exist in our dry surface spaces and halls as the infrastructure is not conducive to supporting a variety of gymnasium sports like basketball and volleyball and are primarily available only during the off-season. Further, balancing use for social gatherings and recreation activities in hall spaces can also be a challenge. Further the hall in Moyer and the École Père Kenneth Kearns gymnasium have administrative limitations that do not support spontaneous use activities.

Strategies to mitigate unmet needs

Several strategies could be considered when evaluating how to best address current unmet needs and prepare for future growth requirements for gymnasium and court activities.

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Potential strategies include:

1. Continue to evaluate utilization for halls and dry surface spaces in recreation facilities and adjust based on community need.
2. Consider adding new curling dry surface spaces into the multi-sport court inventory.
3. Consider the modification of existing spaces into dedicated gymnasium/court facilities for future revitalization projects.
4. Where feasible, add new dedicated gymnasium/court spaces as part of new construction or as a stand-alone facility.
5. Explore future partnerships.

Council and Committee History

- January 28, 2025 THAT Administration prepare a report for Council's Consideration by April 29, 2025, with a review of all indoor gymnasium and multi-sport court spaces within County facilities, including the assessment of:
1. Unmet demand for these spaces;
 2. Where the greatest space deficiencies exist;
 3. Strategies that could be implemented to mitigate any unmet needs; and
 4. Whether additional facilities should be considered.

Other Impacts

Policy: n/a

Financial/Budget: n/a

Legislative/Legal: n/a

Interdepartmental: n/a

Master Plan/Framework: Recreation and Culture Strategy Implementation Plan

Enclosures

- 1 Gymnasium and multi-sport court presentation
- 2 Recreation and Culture Strategy – Implementation Plan
- 3 Recreation and Culture Strategy engagement – What we heard report 2023