
HALDIMAND COUNTY

Report CDS-02-2025 Hagersville Active Living Centre

For Consideration by Special Council on February 27, 2025



OBJECTIVE:

To provide Council with an overview of planned operations and associated budget impacts of the Hagersville Active Living Centre.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report CDS-01-2025 Hagersville Active Living Centre be received.

Prepared and Respectfully submitted: Mike Evers, MCIP, RPP, BES, General Manager, Community & Development Services

Approved: Cathy Case, Chief Administrative Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The 2021 Capital Budget included an initiative to construct the Hagersville Library and Active Living Centre. In June 2023, Council approved an updated design and budget which was then included in the 2024 Tax-supported Operating Budget. Since that time, staff have retained a project architect, finalized design and floor plans, secured all development approvals, retained a contractor and initiated construction. With construction anticipated to be completed late in 2025, plans for the Active Living Centre (ALC) component of the project are now being finalized. These plans include creating/hiring for new programmer positions, developing facility program plans, developing maintenance contracts and establishing a schedule of fees which will generate revenues to off-set the costs of operations. Plans are also being finalized for the library component of the project.

BACKGROUND:

The 2021 Capital Budget included an initiative to construct the Hagersville Library and Active Living Centre. In June 2023, Council approved an updated design and budget which resulted in an increase in facility size and functional opportunities. The increased project budget was formally approved by Council as part of the 2024 Tax-supported Operating Budget. Throughout 2024, a staff team worked diligently with the project architect (CGS Architects Inc.) to finalize the facility design which included functional floor plan, site plan, civil engineering plans, landscaping plan and other technical matters. This work culminated in the issuance of a building permit in June, retention of a contractor in July and construction commencement in August. Construction is now well underway and project completion is anticipated in late 2025. Given the progress and associated construction timelines, operational plans for the Active Living Centre (ALC) component of the project are now being finalized. These plans include creating/hiring new programmer positions, developing facility program plans, developing maintenance contracts, and establishing a schedule of fees which will generate revenues to off-set the costs of operations. These proposed operating plans are presented as part of this report in support of the 2025 budget submissions. While the focus of this report is on the 'net new' services and spaces

associated with the ALC, it also provides a brief overview of the increased service levels and budgetary impacts of the new library.

ANALYSIS:

Construction Status

Construction of the facility was initiated in August 2024. Since that time, significant progress has been made including:

- Foundation work completed, including foundation insulation;
- Concrete masonry unit work well underway at east and west walls of ALC with scaffolding and tarping in place for temperature control. South wall block is complete and main portion of north wall block complete;
- Structural wood framing well underway at walls and roof of southern portion of ALC; and,
- Site services installation well underway and ongoing.

Figure 1 below is a recent drone image that demonstrates the above described construction progress. As the schedule currently stands, the earliest substantial completion of the new facility will be November 2025. All aspects of budget planning—staff hiring, maintenance contracts, utilities, etc.—have been informed by this timeline. Of particular note, the project is proceeding within budget.

Figure 1



Photo taken February 12, 2025

Active Living Centre

Staff and Programming:

As part of the 2025 Tax-supported Operating Budget, the creation of three (3) full-time equivalent programmer positions which will be in the form of two (2) permanent full-time and two (2) permanent part-time positions, is being proposed. These front-line staff will be responsible for providing high quality, inclusive customer experiences and services, from welcoming the public to the facility, answering enquiries and directing people to the Library for corporate Community Hub services, developing and delivering diverse and engaging programs for participants of all ages/abilities, collaborating with third-party providers/volunteers/agencies for program/service delivery, managing multiple activities throughout the facility at one-time, engaging with the public (users of the atrium, café or other drop-in areas), supporting rentals, handling bookings, etc. They will also be called upon to handle day-to-day minor facility maintenance issues. Daily cleaning will be completed through a third-party contract managed by the Facilities, Parks, Cemeteries and Forestry Operations Division. Given the anticipated earliest occupancy of November 2025, the hiring of the programmers is proposed for October 2025. Hiring staff prior to the facility opening is critical to ensure all necessary training, facility orientation and role expectations can be completed. Further, it affords the team the necessary time to build out all plans for the facility, including programming, marketing, user/use agreements, facility rules and policies, registration/booking processes, etc.

A preliminary programming plan has been developed and is included as Attachment 1. The preliminary plan, which demonstrates the ability to offer up to 105 total program/activity hours per week, is provided as an example of what is possible in the facility given the staff complement and associated hours of operation that would be available. The preliminary plan is based upon input received from the consultants that worked with staff on the Community and Recreation Facilities Strategy (CRFS) as well as numerous consultations with other municipalities that operate similar facilities (e.g., West Lincoln, St. Catharines, Brant County and Pelham). Of note, the plan is subject to change based upon further analysis, stakeholder consultation and the inputs of the programming staff that are to be hired in the fall. In addition, the proposed County-wide programming strategy (which is a new initiative proposed by the CDP Division in the 2025 Tax-supported Operating Budget) would be a critical input in developing a suitable programming menu for residents to access.

It should also be noted that staff are continuing to meet with the Hagersville Lions Club to examine the potential for them to join the County as an operating partner of the ALC. Such an arrangement would be similar to that which exists in other County-owned facilities such as the Lions Halls in Caledonia, Jarvis and Fisherville, wherein the group would be responsible for operations of community (non-sport/recreation) events and functions that could take place in the ALC (e.g., wedding receptions, family reunions/gatherings).

Revenues:

Preliminary estimates have been developed for revenue generation but will not be reflected in the 2025 budget given the expectation that full operations will not commence until late 2025, but more likely early 2026. As such, Council could expect to see revenue figures in next year's Tax-supported Operating Budget.

With the proposed staff complement, available facility hours and potential programming mix, staff estimate that optimal operations could yield \$200,000 of revenue annually. It is expected that the first full year of operations (2026) will not approach this level given there will be 'test and trial' periods for various programs (which could lead to cancelling some and then launching others) as well as the time required to generate community interest and participation (including marketing the facility and its offerings). These estimates are based on feedback received from consulted municipalities (as noted above) as well as the CRFS consulting team. The fees that would generate the revenues are

preliminary and require further detailed analysis before they are incorporated into the County's User Fees By-law. A full tariff of fees will be developed in the months ahead and will be informed by the consultant hired to work with staff on the community programming strategy as well as more detailed surveys of comparator municipalities.

It is expected that revenues will rise over time as the right mix of programs is established and community interest develops. As noted above, the development of a County-wide programming strategy, which will include specific focus on the ALC, will assist staff in building out the right balance of structured and unstructured program and service offerings at the facility. It is anticipated that by year two of operations (2027), revenues will approach closer to the anticipated optimal operations level of \$200,000. Also, over the first several years of operations, staff will be examining how best to maximize usage of the facility and associated revenue generation. This may include looking at opportunities to expand hours of operation (earlier opening, more evenings) which could be supported (in future) by student employees.

Library:

The library component of the project represents approximately 455 square metres (4,900 square feet). While this measurement is not an increase to the size of the existing branch facility, the newly designed space will be configured and utilized more effectively, allowing for a larger library program room and additional public computer resources. The library will also benefit from shared space elsewhere in the facility, namely public washrooms, utility rooms, the shared lobby and entrance, and occasional use of the ACL multi-purpose room for larger library program venues. Moreover, the facility will offer adequate off-street parking spaces for library users, space which is presently non-existent. The new facility will accommodate current collections with room for approximately 20% growth, keeping in mind that while demand for physical, print materials will persist in the foreseeable future, true growth in collection usage is anticipated primarily in digital formats. The branch will open to the public an additional 14 hours per week, on Monday and Fridays, increasing the total weekly hours of operation from 37 to 51. As a result of this increase in service, a 0.8 FTE staff resource is being requested as part of the Tax-supported Operating Budget. All other services of the library will continue to be provided with the opportunity to potentially expand the range of workshops/classes/meetings that are offered over time given the increased functionality and space that will be available.

Maintenance and Operations – Entire Facility:

Given the ALC & Library is not expected to be fully operational (programs running, private rentals, services, etc.) until late 2025 or (more likely) the start of 2026, the full impact of operations and maintenance will not be seen until the 2026 budget. For the 2025 budget staff have only accounted for three months of operational costs (hydro, gas, telecommunications, water, sanitary) and maintenance (custodian service contract). Current plans are to contract out all day-to-day custodial responsibilities, while any functional issues, repairs, etc. will be handled by County Facilities staff.

FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

The 2025 Tax-supported Operating Budget contains the following impacts for the Active Living Centre:

- Staffing: 3 months salary and benefits for 3 full-time equivalent Recreation Programmers = \$62,300.
- Purchase of programming supplies – \$14,700.
- Revenue: none – revenue to begin in 2026.
- Maintenance: 3 months for custodian contract = \$5,000 (includes library).
- Operations: 3 months for utilities = \$15,500 (includes library).

The costs above total \$97,500 and have been included in the 2025 Tax-supported Operating Budget as a new initiative. It should be noted that these are preliminary estimates, and programming and operating costs will become better defined over time. Significant increases in costs can be expected starting in 2026, given the timing of when the ALC is planned to open in 2025. These increased costs will be partially offset as programming revenues come online in 2026 as well.

The cost impacts associated with the library component of the project are as follows:

- Staffing: 28 additional Library Assistant hours per week equalling \$11,930 for 3 months (\$47,720 annually)
- Professional development and travel expenses associated with two additional part-time employees, for 3 months equalling \$50 (\$200 annually)
- Programming supplies increase, \$100 for 3 months (\$400 annually)

STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:

Not applicable.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: No

By-law: No

Budget Amendment: No

Policy: No

REFERENCES:

None.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Preliminary Programming Plan.