



## **Expression of Interest: James Whyte Arena**

70 Ormond Street N, Thorold ON L2V 1Z2

### **1. Introduction**

The James Whyte Arena was constructed in 1936 and used as one of the City of Thorold's principal public winter recreation facilities until its recent closure in 2020. This facility is located at 70 Ormond Street North in the downtown Thorold business district and is connected internally to the Frank Doherty Arena, which has been recently upgraded and will remain in full operation.

The City is currently working on a long-term strategy to repurpose the property on which the James Whyte Arena is situated and expect to implement this plan in 2027. This presents an opportunity to establish an interim use for the existing building and parking space for passive and organized recreational purposes.

The City of Thorold is issuing a Call For "Expressions of Interest" (EOI) to any private or public user groups wishing to rent or lease some or all the available space for the purposes of providing recreational, cultural, or special interest programming aimed at enhancing the health, lifestyle and quality of life for Thorold residents of all ages.

### **2. Background Information**

The Thorold Community Arenas Facility is comprised primarily of two (2) ice pads joined by a common foyer, which provides access to offices, canteen, meeting space and washrooms. The building is situated on a 3.75-acre parcel of City-owned land. The original arena, known as the James Whyte Arena was built in 1936 (83 years old). The larger arena, known as the Frank Doherty Arena, was built in 1974 (45 years old) and was constructed to meet current design standards with respect to playing surface and spectator viewing areas/seating. Both facilities have had minor upgrades and major maintenance improvements to keep the operation of both ice pads functioning in a state of good repair. Renovations occurred in 1976, 1986, 1992, 1995, 2002, 2016 and 2017.

The age and physical condition of the existing arenas was the key determinant in the strategy behind any decision to close, extend the service life or replace the arenas with similar or more modern amenities.

In 2012, Thorold City Council advanced recommendations developed in the *2009 Parks and Recreation Master Plan* and retained the consulting firm *LeisurePlan International Inc.* to study ice time utilization and to prepare a strategy to guide future Councils on its facility needs for the period 2015 - 2020. The Summary Report, entitled *City of Thorold - Arena Facility Provision Strategy (November 2013)* included research and extensive consultation with user groups to assess their current and future needs (see **Appendix "A"**). When considering the investment required to maintain safe and efficient operations relative to the capital cost of replacement the study concluded:

*"The James Whyte Arena should be replaced within 5 years and that improvements and on-going repairs should be made to the Frank Doherty Arena to allow it to continue to operate for the next 10 years."*

The consultants and the ad-hoc committee assessed five (5) facility options that would accommodate the demand for future ice time. At that time, two additional approaches involving the shared/joint development and operation of new facilities with Brock University were discussed but not advanced.

The arena facility provision strategy proposed two key actions:

- *Invest in capital requirements to ensure continued safe and efficient operation of the Frank Doherty Arena during the next ten years. At the end of that period (2019/2020) an assessment as to the feasibility and efficiency of further investments to extend the lifespan and operation of the facility should be undertaken.*
- *Replace the existing James Whyte Arena with a new single ice pad facility on the existing site. The new single ice pad facility should include provision for public and user areas (lobby, warm viewing area, food court style food and beverage area) to improve and enhance the overall quality of the municipal arena facilities.*

It was determined that the replacement facility should be increased in size from approximately 22,500 sf to a minimum of 48,270 sf (gross area). The estimated cost at that time for the new facility was projected to be \$13.8 to \$18.5 million (in 2013 dollars).

In January of 2019, City Council engaged the services of *CIMCO Refrigeration* to undertake an analysis of the ice plant and to assess the operating conditions relative to the applicable *Canadian Safety Standards Association (CSA)* minimum requirements. The report entitled "Ammonia Ice Rink Plant Review" (April 2019) identified nine (9) recommendations prioritized based on operator and public safety, efficiency and best practices (see **Appendix "B"**).

In February of 2019, City Council engaged the services of the structural engineering consulting firm *McIntosh Perry* to conduct a *Building Condition Assessment* for the James Whyte Arena. The investigation concluded:

*“Our visual review of the property found the facility to be in fair-to-poor condition and serviceable but in need of significant modifications based on its age and inherent design issues. These issues require address in the immediate and short terms. Despite the proposed repairs/replacements, the physical dimensions of the framed structure and proximity to the east embankment negates any consideration for enlargement of the ice pad dimensions to meet current standards. The refrigerated ice pad facility has exceeded useful service life with short-term restoration costs nearing full facility replacement costs for a similar sized arena. Consideration should be given for possible building repurposing such as a dry floor use (no refrigeration system) as opposed to demolition at least over the short-term.”*

Based on this assessment, the consultant estimated the total cumulative costs to keep the arena in a state of good repair at approximately \$6.1 million (see **Appendix “C”**).

In September 2019, *HDR Architecture Associates Inc.* completed an assessment of the existing architectural building conditions of the James Whyte Arena and concluded:

*“The James Whyte Arena was original to the site and has passed its feasible life cycle. With numerous accessibility shortcomings and visitor path of travel concerns, issues with the current building enclosure and separation from the main lobby, investing capital into this portion of the facility would not be recommended beyond life safety requirements”.  
(See **Appendix “D”**)*

Since its closure to the public at the onset of the COVID -19 pandemic the building and property has been used as a Temporary Operations Centre during the completion of the Municipal Operations Centre at 1543 Beaverdams Road. All vehicles and equipment will be removed from the site before April 26, 2024. The facility will be available for a tour hosted by City Staff to allow user groups to inspect and ask questions.

### **3. Submission Information**

Date of Issue:	<b>Friday, April 19, 2024</b>
Facility Preview Tour:	<b>Wednesday May 1</b> 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. or 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Submission Deadline:	<b>Monday, May 13, 2024, at 3:00 p.m.</b>

All submissions must be completed on the attached forms.  
Supplementary information can be provided as needed.

### **4. Current Rates and Fees**

The City of Thorold has established the following minimum user rates for the hourly or daily use of the facility.

<b>Fee Description</b>	<b>Rates</b>
Hourly Fee	\$55.00
Under 21 Hourly Fee	\$50.00
Full Day Rate	\$550.00

- Note 1: All rentals must provide insurance. Permit holders have the option of providing a Certificate of Insurance to Staff prior to rental or may purchase insurance through the City for an additional fee.
- Note 2: The EOI proposal may include modifications or adjustments to these minimum rates provided these details are described in the submission (i.e. leasehold improvements, in-kind contributions, grants, and external subsidies).

## 5. Evaluation Process

All submissions will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- a) Alignment with *Parks, Trails, and Recreation Master Plan* Objectives (20%)
- b) Thorold Residents Participation (20%)
- c) Reliance of Municipal Staff Support (15%)
- d) Organizational Structure (20%)
- e) Compatibility with Existing City-Run or Sponsored Programs (25%)

Successful submissions will be selected to advance to the next stage of the process based on strength of the submission.

## 6. Submission Forms

All submissions must complete the 6-page Application Form attached in **Appendix “E”**  
**All applications are to be submitted by email to [Community.Services@Thorold.ca](mailto:Community.Services@Thorold.ca)**

## 7. Appendices

- “A” City of Thorold Arena Provision Strategy (November 2013)  
<https://www.thorold.ca/en/city-hall/resources/Appendix-A.pdf>
- “B” Ammonia Ice Plant Review (2019)  
<https://www.thorold.ca/en/city-hall/resources/Appendix-B.pdf>
- “C” Building Condition Assessment for the James Whyte Arena (2019)  
<https://www.thorold.ca/en/city-hall/resources/Appendix-C.pdf>
- “D” Architectural Building Condition Assessment – Whyte Arena (2019)  
<https://www.thorold.ca/en/city-hall/resources/Appendix-L.pdf>
- “E” EOI Submission Form Package (2024)  
[https://www.thorold.ca/en/recreation-and-culture/Thorold\\_Community\\_Arena.aspx](https://www.thorold.ca/en/recreation-and-culture/Thorold_Community_Arena.aspx)