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Recreation Centre has something for everyone

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As a City of Orillia staff member, who has worked in the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department for more than 15 years, I have had the opportunity to work on projects and with community groups that have attributed to a sense of community pride I often hear of when residents and visitors speak about Orillia. Currently, I am working on the recreation facility project, and like so many others including fellow staff, members of Council and stakeholder groups, I am excited to be moving forward on the recreation file. The recreation project team has been working hard to make this facility a community hub where people of all ages and abilities can come together to play, learn, exercise, relax and have fun.

Throughout the design process, it has been exciting to meet with many community members and user groups to gain an understanding of their unique needs and ideas of what this facility can offer the community. This information has been used to inspire a design that will not only serve the recreation needs of the community, but will also allow our budding athletes to achieve a higher level of training through the multi-use functionality of the building.

Key to the design of this facility has been the idea of an open-concept plan that builds on the relationship between all components of the facility. The connectivity between components occurs from the centre of the facility where the reception desk is located in a foyer-type setting. This central space opens into two dividable multi-purpose rooms, which will promote gatherings, small performances and events. Further down is the preschool room, which will feature a dedicated outdoor playground outfitted specifically for this age group.

The aquatics centre will accommodate training and competitive needs in the 25 meter, 8 lane pool and also features upper-level viewing for 250 people. A rockwall, tarzan rope and two different diving board heights have been included to attract youth, adventure seekers and parents who want to play. This pool also features a moveable floor, which will accommodate sports such as water polo, scuba diving, underwater hockey and more. The leisure pool has been designed to provide opportunities for learning and

discovery-based play for people of all ages. This pool has interactive spray features, bubblers and a whale-shaped water channel that is similar in nature to a lazy river. Lastly, the aquatic centre includes a steam room and a therapy pool which provides opportunities for relaxation and therapy focused programs.

The gymnasium component is sized to accommodate two basketball courts that can host a full range of sport from University-sanctioned games to novice house league due to the adjustable nets. When open, the two gymnasiums will be large enough to accommodate six pickleball courts, or six badminton courts, or three volleyball courts spaced to allow for a higher level of competitive play. This space will be a great spot for drop-in programs for preschoolers, youth and adults. When the gyms are combined, including the spectator viewing, this space can accommodate up to 1,926 people opening up the potential for large-scale assemblies such as graduations.

The recreation facility also features a three-lane, 250 meter walking/jogging track on the upper level, which can be accessed from the reception area or directly through the fitness centre. Unique to the track design, will be a cross connection within the loop that offers multiple grade changes, providing a challenge for those who choose to utilize it. However, this connection will not affect the 250-meter loop. The fitness centre will provide a full range of services including a combination of strength training and cardiovascular equipment, plus opportunities for both small and large group classes. Fitness patrons will be able to build on their workout experience by using the pool, track, fitness studio, small group training space and the high performance training area.

Please take the time to view the design renderings available at orillia.ca and discover for yourself why I and so many others are excited for this facility to open in the summer of 2018. As the plan advances through the construction design phase, updated information will be made available online.