# Public Engagement Report

Cambridge Recreation Complex

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1 Background

The City of Cambridge provided members of the public and key stakeholders with a number of opportunities to learn about the Cambridge Recreation Complex project and to provide input on the five site locations that have been proposed; the type of facility (single or split); as well as to submit ideas and thoughts in general. This report summarizes these opportunities and the feedback that has been received.

1.2 Public Engagement Opportunities

The City made a concerted effort to inform the public about the ways people could learn about the options and share their input. These efforts were comprised of three main approaches:

- Public meeting/information session – April 3, 2019
- Online information portal and survey – Engage Cambridge – April 3- 24, 2019
- Two delegation evenings – May 13 and May 14, 2019

1.3 Promotion

Advertising

Advertising in local and digital media helped ensure that people knew how to get informed and engaged.

- Cambridge Times, Metroland Media Group Ltd. - March 28, 2019
  o Print ½ page colour ad
- Cambridge Times, Metroland Media Group Ltd. – March 26 – April 2, 2019
  o Two digital banner ads, 20,000 impressions
- Corus Radio – 91.5 The Beat and 107.5 DAVE ROCKS
  o 91.5 The Beat and 107.5 DAVE ROCKS campaign – March 27 – April 3, 2019
- Facebook and Instagram ads - Six digital ads across 2 ad sets
  o Public meeting ads - March 27 – April 3
  o Online survey ads - April 5 – April 24
  o Total reach – 27.5K, shares – 128, link clicks – 1625
- Posters and digital signage displayed across City facilities.

Digital and social media
The City issued news posts, starting March 25, 2019, and provided updated information on a project page on the City website (www.cambridge.ca/reccomplex). Social media channels were used to promote the engagement opportunities and feedback mechanisms. Social media was also used to generate discussion and amplify news media coverage.

Facebook – Boosted posts reached 27.5K individuals, shared 128 times.

Twitter – 10 tweets generated a reach of approximately 124K, cumulatively they were retweeted 47 times.

The link to Engage Cambridge and the project website were clicked 2,537 times.

Over 170 comments generated on social media. Many of the comments focused on encouraging Council to make a final decision and move forward; as well as questioning the Conestoga location as an option.

**Media coverage**

Posts on the City website and social media resulted in a large amount of coverage by local news outlets during the consultation period. (Appendix 4)

**Key stakeholder outreach**

Targeted invitations were sent to over 20 sport and recreation groups and key stakeholders to invite them to attend the public meeting and register as delegates during one of the delegation events.

**2 Engagement**

**2.1 Public Meeting**

The Public Meeting/Information session took place on April 3, 2019 between 4 - 8 pm at Cambridge City Hall. It included presentations by the project manager at 5 p.m. and again at 7 p.m.; as well as display boards. There were over 110 members of the public in attendance. People were encouraged to fill out the survey on tablets. An option summary handout was given out for easy reference (Appendix 1).
Media coverage from the meeting focused on comments from residents urging the City to get the project moving.

On April 4, The Cambridge Times noted that, “More than 80 people turned out Wednesday night for an open house to discuss the future of sport and recreation facilities in Cambridge, and the general consensus from the public was “get it done.”

### 2.2 Online Survey

An online survey and information portal was created on the Engage Cambridge platform at [www.engagecambridge.ca](http://www.engagecambridge.ca) (See Appendix 3). The public was encouraged to review and provide feedback online from April 3 to April 24, 2019. The page contained project background, presentations, council reports, and key milestones.

The portal was visited approximately 2.3K times with an average of 251 visitors per day.

### 2.3 Delegation Evenings

Delegation evenings were held on May 13 at 6 p.m. and May 14 at 4 p.m. in City Hall Council Chambers to allow for additional in-person input and insights from the community. City staff was pleased to see youth participating in the delegations and in attendance.

There were 13 delegations representing:
- Active Cambridge
- Cambridge Aquajets
- Cambridge Ringette Association
- Cambridge Mavericks Masters Swim team
- YMCA of Cambridge and Kitchener
- Cambridge Harrier Running Club
- Cambridge Minor Hockey Association
- Invictus Athletics Club
- Rivulettes Women’s hockey Team
- Buckingham Sports
- Preston Figure Skating Club

3. Public Feedback Summary

3.1. Online Survey: www.engagecambridge.ca

The goal of the online survey was to gain feedback on the five potential sites, as well on a single or split facility.

The online survey asked people to rate their preferences in terms of:

- Priority (cost, location, timeline)
- Single or split facility
- Location

In total, 909 respondents completed the survey.

Priority

58% of respondents said location is their main priority, of which 24% preferred 261 Hespeler Road; 13% preferred Southeast Galt; 12% preferred 220 Pinebush Road; 5% - 0 Franklin Blvd; 4% - 850 Fountain Street South.
Facility Options

70% of the respondents preferred a single facility; the remaining 30% preferred a split facility.

Location

In terms of location, the results were mixed with the largest response (39%) favoring 261 Hespeler Road followed by (29%) for Southeast Galt.

3. 2 Common Themes in the Survey Comments

In total, over 390 comments were included in the submissions.

- 82 respondents are in favour of building the facility as quickly as possible.
- 38 respondents wrote in favour of pursuing partnerships or sponsorships with other organizations such as the YMCA, the City of Kitchener, the Region of Waterloo, private industry and/or Buckingham Sports and Entertainment.
- 38 respondents expressed concern about traffic congestion on major road ways.
- 40 respondents comment on the need for access to the facility by public transit.
- 50 respondents requested a 50 metre pool.
- 45 respondents requested that four ice pads be built immediately.
- 47 respondents identified sports tourism opportunities associated with a new facility.

### 3. 3 Common Themes in the Delegation Presentations to Council

- Better indoor recreation facilities are needed immediately
- Build anywhere (location is not important as sports teams routinely travel within the city and province for events)
- Invest in the facility and do not spend money to purchase land
- If splitting the facility will speed up the building/improvement of facilities then that is what should be done
- A single facility would have challenges to maintain temperature and air quality. A dual HVAC system should be considered for a single facility
- A 50m pool and four ice pads would open opportunities to host bigger tournaments and promote sports tourism and economic benefits for the community
- 50m pools exist at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, as well as in the cities of Guelph and Brantford
- Consider private partnership and fundraising opportunities to deliver desired recreational programming at affordable costs

Sports groups reiterated to Council that their main priority is to move forward with the project. Galt Collegiate Institute swim coach Shelley Fitzpatrick said: “we have heard from a variety of groups and I think we can all agree that this needs to move forward and move forward quickly.”

May 13 live stream: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLNQ0gzbkA8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLNQ0gzbkA8)

May 14 live stream: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZHDWfWhor8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZHDWfWhor8)

### 4. Prior Consultation Overview

Planning for a multi-purpose sport and recreation facility began in 2015 after City staff completed a recreational master plan and needs assessment which recommended a new multi-use sports facility to meet current and future recreational needs.

Two task forces were formed and significant public input has been sought and received about the project.

#### 4.1 Public consultation on amenities

Since April of 2015, community engagement has included task force meetings, presentations by delegations at task force meetings, open house and public meetings, feedback through an online survey and through the citizen budget online interactive application and at General Committee and Council meetings.
4.2 Public consultation on site location

Community feedback was obtained during the site evaluation process in 2016 through several channels, including:

- Engage Cambridge online survey with about 1660 responses
- Two public information centres with opportunities for attendees to provide information through informal conversations, comment cards, location theme exhibit, and one-on-one recorded conservations
- Open task force meetings - nearly 15 open meetings were held to allow public to engage in the evaluation process and provide feedback and commentary
- A project website was established and hosted background information and materials, as well as task force agendas and minutes

4.3 Sport Groups Input

In May of 2017, various sports user groups were invited to provide feedback and comments on recreation complex project amenities and location. Sports user groups consulted include minor hockey, ringette, figure skating, competitive swimming, track and field, girl’s minor hockey, minor baseball and Active Cambridge.

5. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Option summary

Appendix 2 - Poster

Appendix 3 - Front page of Engage Cambridge
www.engagewr.ca/cambridge-recreation-complex

Appendix 4 – Media reports
Option Summary

**Single facility:** New building in one site which includes aquatic facilities, gym, fitness track, multi-purpose rooms and two ice pads.

**Split facility:** New building that includes aquatic facilities, gym, fitness track and multipurpose rooms in one of the potential locations and upgrade and expansion of Preston Memorial Auditorium to include a second ice pad.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Considerations</th>
<th>Construction ready in</th>
<th>Estimated Land Costs (Acquisition and site preparation)</th>
<th>Total Project Costs for Single Facility ($95M plus land costs)</th>
<th>Total Project Costs for Split Facility ($73M plus land costs)</th>
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<tr>
<td>261 Hespeler Rd (8 acres)</td>
<td>• Former landfill</td>
<td>2-3.5 years</td>
<td>$8M - $10M</td>
<td>$103-$105M</td>
<td>$81M-$83M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>220-240 Pinebush Rd (23 acres)</td>
<td>• Significant potential for soil contamination</td>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td>$11.5M</td>
<td>$106.5M</td>
<td>$84.5M</td>
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| 0 Franklin Blvd (Franklin at Savage - 21 acres) | • Soil and groundwater contamination present on site  
• Opportunity to decommission and potentially sell John Dolson Centre - reducing overall recreation services operating costs and facility renewal costs | 2-3 years              | $6.5M                                                   | $101.5M                                                        | $79.5M                                                        |
| 850 Fountain St. South (Conestoga College - 26 acres) | • Limited potential for soil and groundwater contamination  
• Opportunity to share parking and potential partnership with Conestoga College | 1-2 years              | $100K + 2.5M for Lease                                  | $97M                                                           | $75M                                                          |
| Southeast Galt (32 acres)       | • City-owned land  
• Limited potential for soil and groundwater contamination  
• Future community hub with two proposed schools and a library  
• Projected population of 26,863 within 1.5 km radius  
• Opportunity to decommission and potentially sell John Dolson Centre - reducing overall recreation services operating costs and facility renewal costs | 1-2 years              | $2M                                                    | $87M                                                           | $75M                                                          |

Additional twin pads in future can be accommodated on all sites at current estimated cost of $26M.
Cambridge Recreation Complex

Get up-to-date on where we are with the project and share your thoughts on what's important to you.

April 3, 2019 from 4 - 8 p.m.

Presentations at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Bowman Room, Cambridge City Hall

Join us

We still want to hear from you. Share your thoughts online April 3 through April 24.

Can't make it in person?

www.cambridge.ca/reccomplex
Cambridge Recreation Complex

Consultation has concluded

We want to hear from you!
Share your priorities and tell us what's important to you

Cambridge Recreation Complex

We are asking the community for feedback on the Southeast Galt site as a potential location for the recreation complex in comparison to the other four sites shortlisted by the Site Evaluation Task Force. We are also asking for feedback on whether you prefer a single or split facility. To view a summary of all facility and site options, see our overview table.

Facility options

- Single Facility - Build a new recreation complex in one of the five locations with aquatic facilities, a gym, a fitness track, multi-purpose rooms and two ice pads. View details on this option
- Split Facility - Split the recreation complex by building a new facility in one of the five locations with aquatic facilities, a gym, a fitness track and multi-purpose rooms AND expand Preston Memorial Auditorium to include a second ice pad. View details on this option

Please note that both a single location facility and the split location facility have the potential for a future second phase to include two more ice pads. These new ice pads could potentially be located at Hespeler Memorial Arena, at the new recreation complex or on other City-owned lands.

Site options

The five sites currently under consideration for a recreation complex are listed below. Click on the title of each location for more information.

- 261 Hespeler Road
- 220-240 Pinebush Road
- 0 Franklin Boulevard (Franklin at Savage)
- 850 Fountain Street South (Conestoga College)
- Southeast Galt city-owned lands (Dundas Street and Myers Road)
The City of Cambridge is inviting city residents to have their say on the proposed Multiplex project this Wednesday. - Lisa Rutledge/Torstar

The Cambridge multiplex project has been four years in the making and is now entering the final stages of the decision-making process.

On Wednesday, April 3, the public will receive an update on the project and have a chance to have their say on what should happen next. The public meeting will take place from 4 to 8 p.m. in the Bowman Room at Cambridge city hall, 50 Dickson St. Presentation on the project will made at 5 and 7 p.m. For those who cannot attend the meeting, the city is collecting feedback online from April 3 to 24.

Planning for a multi-purpose sport and recreation facility began in 2015. Two community task forces were engaged to develop a list of desired programming components and to evaluate possible facility locations.
For more information on the facility needs assessment and the potential sites, visit www.cambridge.ca/reccomplex.
April 3, 2019

Cambridge City Hall to host community meeting on multiplex

The meetings go from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

about 2 hours ago by: KitchenerToday Staff

Cambridge City Hall will be holding a four hour meeting to give you the opportunity to contribute and share your thoughts on the future of the recreational complex.

You can drop in right at 4:00 p.m. in the Bowman room, and the meeting will last until 8:00 p.m.

Presentations will be at 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. to keep you up to date on what's happening with the multiplex at this current time.

The city also saying, if you can't make it in, you can submit your ideas and feedback online.

You can do that from now until April 24th.
April 3, 2019

Video Clip Re: Cambridge looks to public input for Cambridge Recreational Complex

https://kitchener.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=1652217

https://kitchener.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=1652061
April 4, 2019

Cambridge city council wants your feedback on multiplex
You have until April 24 to complete the online survey

about 4 hours ago by: Maddie Demarte

Dozens of people flooded Cambridge City Hall to attend an open house regarding the planned recreation multiplex and where it should be built.

The Bowman Room held many of the city's residents and listened to their opinions on what the next step is for the multiplex.

John Moreira, a resident of Galt, said he supports previous survey results and wishes that the multiplex not be placed by Conestoga College.

"I, myself, feel it's not a good location. It's not central enough, and I would like to see it somewhere closer."

Cambridge Mayor Kathryn McGarry, said city council heard the negative opinion on the Kitchener College site and are looking at more viable options.
"So we've asked staff to go back to the drawing board and look at some of the potential of other sites including again, whether it's going to be a single facility or a split facility and where it could go with the updated costs of the land."

Many of the city's residents feel the same; they would like their voices to be heard and a plan to be put into place.

Kimberly Fowler, a resident of Galt, said she is understanding of the delays but is hopeful that a multiplex is built in the next two to three years.

"I really think that Cambridge needs a quality facility. I go to small towns and their facilities sometimes, I'm actually embarrassed when I think about ours."

You can find a link to all of the proposed sites as well as the online survey here.
April 5, 2019

Get Cambridge multiplex done, say residents

Residents given two options and five locations to consider

NEWS 01:50 PM by Ray Martin  Cambridge Times

Participants at the open house at city hall Wednesday night discuss the various options being considered for the future of Cambridge’s recreational facilities. - Ray Martin/Torstar

More than 80 people turned out Wednesday night for an open house to discuss the future of sport and recreation facilities in Cambridge, and the general consensus from the public was “get it done.”

Seems simple enough, after nearly five years of discussion, but it’s more complicated than that, following the most recent staff report to council. With costs of the once-$80-million multiplex soaring past $95 million, the project may devolve from being one large project, into several smaller ones.

“This is a large and complex project, and we are focused on providing an affordable solution that meets current and future needs of the sports and recreation groups, youth and the community, and is in the best interest of the taxpayers,” Yogesh Shah, city asset manager told the audience that packed the Bowman Room at city hall.
During the 20-minute presentation, residents were asked to rank three main things: multiplex versus splitting up the project; their choice of five possible locations; and how much should be spent.

Here’s a quick rundown on the options.

• A single facility would involve the construction of one large building to house aquatic facilities, with a 25-metre pool, a gym, fitness track, multi-purpose rooms and two ice pads. The cost is estimated to be $95 million, plus land and preparation costs.

• A split facility would involve constructing a new building to house aquatic facilities, gym, fitness track and multi-purpose rooms, in one of the potential locations, and upgrade and expand the Preston Auditorium with a second ice pad. The cost is estimated to be $73 million, plus land and preparation costs.

Five locations are being considered. They include:

• 261 Hespeler Rd.: The Cambridge Flea Market site has eight acres of land and is a central location. It is a potentially contaminated site, which would take up to 3½ years to acquire and prepare, costing up to $10 million (2017 estimated).

• 220-240 Pinebush Rd.: This site has 23 acres of land, which would take up to three years to acquire and prepare, costing $11.5 million (2017 estimate).

• Franklin Blvd.: A vacant 21-acre lot at the corner of Franklin Boulevard and Savage Drive. It would take up to three years to acquire and prepare, costing $6.5 million (2017 estimated). It is known to have soil and groundwater contamination on the site.

• 850 Fountain St. S.: Conestoga College is offering to lease the city 26 acres of land at its Cambridge Campus, for $2.5 million. It would take up to two years to acquire and prepare, at a cost of $100,000 and has the potential to add another two ice pads in future, at an estimated cost of $26 million.

• Southeast Galt: This 32-acre site is already owned by the city and was purchased in 2007 to service the needs of the developing subdivisions in that part of the city. The property was bought to become a community hub that would feature a recreation centre, library and two elementary schools, to serve the estimated 26,800 people living within 1.5 kilometres of it.

“This has been a long time in the works, but we have to make sure … of the path forward and that everyone has a voice,” Shah said.
Mayor Kathryn McGarry told the meeting the open house is the kickoff for the next round of public consultations for the project.

“We have done our work. Now we are waiting to hear back from you,” she said.

Among those who attended Wednesday’s meeting was Alex Hourahine, of Active Cambridge, who has followed the project from the beginning.

“Looking at options and being able to mix and match is a better way to go, to make sure that we come up with something that is affordable. Given what I heard tonight, the fact that we are looking at two to three years out, minimum, before we even get started digging a hole, I think I’m more likely to support expanding perhaps Hespeler Arena to four rinks now, get it done and then consider the aqua centre and gyms as a separate item,” he said.

Hourahine believes that going back to Conestoga College again would lead to a further debate and several more years of delay.

“Our kids have been shortchanged for a long time,” he said. “It’s time we got on with something. If it has to be done in two phases, let’s get on with getting one of them done quickly, and the other one done as affordably and as quickly as we can. I think we’ve heard all the opinions, and it is time to move on.”

George Aikin has also been following the project.

“This is a good night because all the options were laid out. There are so many options and variables that I was happy to come and see what they are,” he said.

Aikin has yet to make up his mind but sees the advantage of splitting things up to serve people who have difficulty getting around the city.

“We are just so far behind,” said one unidentified resident who didn’t provide his name. “This thing should have been built 20 years ago. We should be working on the second complex.”

In addition to Wednesday’s open house, the public is asked to go to engagecambridge.ca to complete an online survey to provide input. The online survey will be available until April 24. After that, staff will consider all the comments received and compile a report for council so it can make a final decision.
May 14, 2019

Another round of delegations on Cambridge proposed multiplex

From the online consultations to the community meetings, Cambridge City Council hopes to have a report by June.

about an hour ago by: Phi Doan

Cambridge City Council heard from a number of delegates on what they wanted from the proposed recreational multiplex.

The facility has had a number of issues getting off the ground, but it seems Council is hopeful to reach a decision soon.

Cambridge Mayor Kathryn McGarry says they're making progress.

"I think over a thousand comments have been received, between the online consultation and the first night of consultation on April 3rd, we will compile that into a result and we will move forward with a report to council at the beginning of June, and hopefully a decision in the middle of June on where we're going to move the complex," she says.

This council meeting saw a number of delegates representing different sports groups within the city.
Many of them hoping the multiplex will fulfill the city's sport's needs.

"We want this 50-metre pool to be able to live up to the standards that we put ourselves through," says Erica Braga, 17, Cambridge Aquajet Competitive Swim Club. "So we want to be able to train in a bigger pool and have the experience, so we can go to bigger meets and be able to compete at our full potential."

Nancy Hall-Jupp, Executive Member, Cambridge Ringette Association, says many of the current ice rink facilities in Cambridge weren't in great shape.

"What I see is four pads at Hespeler arena would be a benefit to Cambridge, if we choose to compete for those provincial and national competition as well as regionals," she says. "Regional tournaments for ringette, you need to have at least two two-pad arenas."

Jennifer Kellett, Representative of Cambridge Harrier Running Club, asking council to include a 200 metre indoor oval track

"That would be fantastic for everybody, obviously the recreational leisure, but also going up into track-and-field athletes for training and perhaps even for hosting indoor meets."

Other delegates were calling for separate smaller facilities that would be easier to manage compared to a single multiplex.

Peter Sweeny, CEO, YMCA of Cambridge and Kitchener, was present at the meeting, telling council to keep in mind the multiplex's proximity to the Cambridge YMCA, while also offering to help navigate the project.

"The City of Cambridge, once it decides where these facilities are going to be located, I just wanted to let them know that if they would be interested in having a conversation with the 'Y' about a further partnership around how those faculties get operated, that we would be willing to have that conversation," he says.
Consultations continue for Cambridge recreation complex

https://kitchener.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=1683097
May 14, 2019

Sports groups have their say on Cambridge recreation facility

Groups seek 50m pool, four ice pads, six-lane walking/running track

Various sports groups were at city hall Monday to update council on their facility needs as councillors ponder building a multiplex or building new facilities across Cambridge. - Ray Martin/Torstar

The next round of public consultations concerning the Cambridge recreation facility got underway Monday with a special council meeting to hear from the city’s sports groups.

“It’s a bit like déjà vu all over again,” Active Cambridge’s Alex Hourahine told councillors as he reiterated much of the same speech he made in 2015 when discussion of the city’s multimillion-dollar multiplex began.

He made his first pitch for better sports facilities July 31, 2015 and has since been before council seven times to advocate on behalf of local sports groups.
“All of the information I gave then (2015) is still relevant today, in fact, only more so,” he said.

While debate continues over where the new ice rinks, gyms and pools should be located, Hourahine reminded council why the facilities are important — engaging youth in activities that teach solid life skills.

Cambridge is blessed with an abundance of really good coaches, Hourahine told council.

“We have amazing coaches in Cambridge, we are so rich in great coaches whether it be in swimming, whether it be hockey, whether it be in volleyball, you name it. They need the tools to do the job. Just give them the tools and they will do the job. They’ll do an awesome job.”

Hourahine, like other members of Cambridge sports community, believes “we are on the cusp of a great opportunity to not just give our community the sports facilities they need, but to be able to develop that into a destination.”

During the presentations that followed by the Cambridge Aquajets, Cambridge Mavericks masters swim team, Cambridge Ringette and Cambridge Harriers, emphasis was not only placed on building top-notch facilities, but also facilities capable of hosting major events and tournaments. Mayor Kathryn McGarry is on board with the sports tourism concept and asked several of the groups if there would be any benefit to consulting with Waterloo Region’s sports tourism professionals in designing the city’s new facilities. She was told yes.

For aquatics, a strong pitch was made for a 50-metre pool, instead of the 25-metre pool suggested by consultants. The groups argued that the city needs an additional swimming pool to accommodate their current needs and a 50-metre pool could host more than a dozen major tournaments annually.

Shelley Fitzpatrick, the swim coach at Galt Collegiate Institute and a convener for the Waterloo County Secondary School Athletic Association, told council the membership on her school’s swim club is limited because of a lack of facilities and more students would join if another pool was available.

All of the competitive swimming groups said that they haven’t been able to host a tournament in Cambridge because there is no 50-metre pool. Further, that in order to practice or compete, they now have to travel to Waterloo, Guelph or Brantford.
Nancy Hall-Jupp spoke to the needs of both ringette and aquatic groups. Regarding aquatics, she pointed out that John Dolson Pool is 25m in length versus the W.G. Johnson pool’s 25-yard length.

“That’s a big difference as well when you are training. You need to build up that stamina for a full 50 metres versus the 25 because you are doing more turns, so we really need that 50 metres,” she said.

Speaking from her experience working at the Waterloo Rec Centre, Hall-Jupp said that with the larger facility eight different programs can run simultaneously, while in Cambridge only one or two programs can run concurrently.

Speaking to the issue of ice rinks, there are challenges for ringette players at both the Karl Homuth and Hespeler arena, Hall-Jupp said. At Homuth, the change rooms are small, it has a small ice pad and unreliable refrigeration affecting the ice quality. Meanwhile at Hespeler, the original rink is Olympic size, rather than the NHL size used by the ringette league. Another issue for players in Hespeler is lugging heavy equipment bags up and down the steps to dressing rooms, so a larger elevator is needed.

Regarding tournaments, many sports organizations won’t consider a city unless it has a four-pad facility and is close to the highway and hotels, Hall-Jupp said. She also noted that Cambridge has five different sized ice surfaces in its arenas, which makes hosting tournaments a challenge.

“Some improvement that could be made are: create a four-pad option at Hespeler Arena with appropriate amenities; include ice users in the programming discussions of ice facilities; create partnerships to share resources, training facilities and grant opportunities; rather than building something appealing to the eye, build a functional facility within budget, that has the amenities we require to provide sports to the community,” she said.

The Cambridge Harriers also addressed council regarding the creation of an indoor running/walking track similar to those in Waterloo and North Dumfries. They suggested a six-lane, 200-metre oval track should be created to accommodate both walkers and runners at the same time. Waterloo has a four-lane facility with two shorter lanes for sprinting attached.

Council also heard from Cambridge YMCA chief administrative officer Peter Sweeney, who urged council to continue its long partnership with the YMCA, however, should the city move ahead with building a sports facility on the Grand River Flea Market property, it not include aquatic facilities.
Cambridge resident Connie Cody provided council with food for thought regarding its 32-acre site in southeast Galt. She was concerned that the proposed hockey rinks, gymnasiums, a library and an aquatic centre would not fit in with two elementary schools and would pose safety concerns for children. Rather than a multiplex, it would be better to disperse the new sports facilities across the city in different neighbourhoods, Cody said.

The second and final round of public consultations on the Cambridge recreation facility takes place today at 4 p.m. A final decision on the project will be made by council by the end of June.
Dream of central location for Cambridge sports multiplex lives on

City-owned Bishop Street site getting second look

This property at the corner of Bishop Street and Conestoga Boulevard is being given consideration as a possible site for a new sports complex in Cambridge. - Grand River Conservation Authority

CAMBRIDGE — The 44-acre chunk of land on Bishop Street is more than big enough to hold the $100-million sports multiplex Cambridge covets.

The city owns it and it's smack dab in the middle of Galt, Preston and Hespeler.

The intriguing woodlot off Bishop Street — between Conestoga Boulevard, the Energy + building and homes and highrises on Lena
Crescent — may be the latest perfectly imperfect answer to the five-year nightmare that has been the city's search for a multiplex site.

"The site is challenging," Cambridge Mayor Kathryn McGarry said on Wednesday after two nights of community delegations speaking to the multiplex matter that never really seems to go away or go anywhere.

"But if there is a portion of it that could be built upon, then that's not out of the realm of possibilities."

The possibilities could be boundless, or they could be non-existent.

Three years ago, the multiplex site selection committee kept the site off of the list of the top five candidates. Initial reports from the Grand River Conservation Authority and the city, McGarry said, were that the wetland was not feasible to build on. But the city is taking a second look.

In early May, city and authority staff visited the site designated as wetland by the GRCA and Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. Their observations were to be taken back to senior city staff.

Now, city council awaits a report as it ponders whether to push new recreational facilities onto a city-owned site in southeast Galt or to simply renovate and expand outdated recreational facilities scattered throughout the city. Council might do a bit of both.

The original council-supported multiplex location at Conestoga College, deemed too close to Kitchener by detractors, was tossed aside when the centrally located Cambridge Centre mall had an abandoned Sears store to fill. But city negotiations with the mall's owners failed.

The Bishop Street site, suddenly worth a second look, is only footsteps from the mall. The mayor wants a decision on the location by June's end.
"We need a really good assessment," said McGarry, who hopes to get the latest report on Bishop Street as soon as possible.

"Are there threatened species in there? Is it wetland? Is it bog? Is it a marsh? What's the nature of it?"

And most important, can it be built upon? Those high-tension hydro lines running along the Conestoga Boulevard are problematic.

Regional Coun. Karl Kiefer, a big multiplex booster during his 23 years on Cambridge city council, sent an email to city councillors on Tuesday asking them to take another serious look at the site.

Kiefer believes only seven or eight acres of the site are too environmentally sensitive to be built on, leaving plenty of room for the grand multiplex concept the city began hotly pursuing seven years ago.

"All it would take is political will," Kiefer told city council in his email.

"Our existing sports facilities need to be replaced. The people of Cambridge deserve better than what has happened in this process."
Cambridge council offered fresh ice pad proposal

4 ice pads could be created on Franklin Boulevard

OWeners of the Sport Park on Franklin Boulevard are prepared to build two new ice pads on their site should a deal be struck with the city. - Ray Martin/Torstar

Another option was put back on the table Tuesday as council heard from sports groups about their need for new facilities as the city continued its discussions on the Cambridge recreation complex.

John Hook, vice-president of Buckingham Sports, appeared as a delegate at the May 14 special council meeting, offering to build two new ice pads at the Cambridge Sports Park if a deal can be reached with the city. That would give local sports organizations a four-pad facility for large tournaments in a central location on Franklin Boulevard not far from restaurants, hotels and Highway 401.

Part of that deal would hinge on the city promising not to build two new ice pads of its own.
Several members of council were intrigued by the idea and wanted to know more about how the deal would work. Hook said, "that would be up to the lawyers to sort out."

Should a deal be brokered, Hook said the new ice pads could be built and ready for action within 13 months at a cost of about $14 million.

Hook said that in Toronto and London, Buckingham Sports facilities provide ice for men's and women's hockey groups, and has change rooms to accommodate the needs of both genders; something that is lacking at Cambridge's older arenas.

Rob Hedges, speaking on behalf of the Cambridge Rivulettes, told councillors earlier in the meeting that updates are needed immediately to better accommodate women's hockey teams in Cambridge, particularly at the Preston Auditorium where the Rivulettes play.

Councillors also heard from Kara Judge from the Invictus Athletics Club, which is a city field and track club. Although there is no lack of good outdoor facilities at local high schools — like Jacob Hespeler Secondary School and St. Benedict Catholic Secondary School — there are no indoor tracks available and the club trains at the Waterloo Memorial Recreation Complex.

"We are Cambridge proud," Judge said. "What we want is a place we can call home right here in Cambridge ... From November to April we gave the City of Waterloo almost $3,000. That's money we want to spend in Cambridge."

Ideally, Invictus Athletics, like the Cambridge Harriers, would like the city to build a six-lane, 200-metre, rubberized track as part of the new Cambridge recreation facility. A track that size would not only be for training, but also accommodate track and field tournaments.

Tom Hilborn, representing the Preston Figure Skating Club, thanked the city for its support over the years.

“I think it’s time we gave the other groups what they need: A 50-metre pool, six-lane indoor track, the gyms, the exercise areas, and anything else the members and athletes need. And after all, we just may use it, too.”

Galt Collegiate Institute swim coach Shelley Fitzpatrick summed up the feelings of athletic organizations that made presentations to council over the two days of meetings.
“We have heard from a variety of different groups and I think we can all agree that this needs to move forward and move forward quickly,” she said, suggesting a liaison committee be struck, made up of representatives from the different groups to assist in designing the new sports facilities.

Staff has been directed by council make that happen once a final decision has been made.