

THE CORPORATION OF THE
CITY OF WHITE ROCK
CORPORATE REPORT



DATE: April 29, 2024

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: John Woolgar, Director Recreation and Culture

SUBJECT: Kent Street Activity Centre Needs Assessment Study

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive for information, the report dated April 29, 2024, from the Director of Recreation and Culture, titled “Kent Street Activity Centre Needs Assessment Study;” and

1. Direct staff to share this corporate report titled Kent Street Activity Centre Needs Assessment Study, as well as the accompanying needs assessment report, with the Community Hub Steering Committee for their consideration.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this corporate report is to update Council on the Kent Street Activity Centre Needs Assessment report. The Kent Street Activity Centre is a valued community facility but is aging and requires significant re-investment. The options for re-investment could include renovation, replacement, expansion, and/or relocation.

White Rock’s Senior population continues to grow. As of 2016, White Rock had 10,555 residents aged 55 years or older, representing 52.90% of its population (Statistics Canada, 2016 Census). This number increased in 2021 to 11,995 residents aged 55 years or older, representing 54.60% of its population (Statistics Canada, 2021 Census).

Together with the Kent Street Seniors Society Executive Committee, the City selected RC Strategies to conduct the Kent Street Activity Centre Needs Assessment by RC Strategies. The Needs Assessment study explored activity needs of older adults (55+) in the community, recreation trends related to older adults (55+), resident preferences and perceived needs, as well as industry best practices.

The Kent Street Needs Assessment is now complete and includes a core recommendation to develop the identified need for seniors activity spaces as part of a new community ‘hub’ facility in White Rock. The results of this study will be presented to Council at their regular meeting on April 29 by RC Strategies consultant Stephen Slawuta.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

Motion # & Meeting Date	Motion Details
2022-299 July 11, 2022	THAT Council: 1. Approve a Needs Assessment Study for the Kent Street Activity Centre be conducted; and 2. Direct this study be completed under a cost-sharing formula with the Kent Street Seniors Society at an estimated cost of \$25,000. Motion Carried

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

History of Kent Street Activity Centre

Senior Centres are welcoming and inclusive spaces that foster social connections, healthy living, and a feeling of safety and dignity for older adults. Kent Street Activity Centre has been a hub for seniors' services in the community for decades, providing a wide variety of recreational, culture, and social programs. Volunteerism, social connectivity and a "place of being" have been at the heart of all Kent Street activities, programs, and events for the past 50 years.

Originally constructed as a multi-use 6,000 square foot facility in 1973, an expansion was completed in 1991 which increased its size to 8,000 square feet. In 2005, a further expansion funded by the Kent Street Seniors' Society added a stage and auditorium spaces. Accessibility upgrades were completed in 2011 and an expansion of the kitchen was completed in 2012 with funding from the City, Kent Street Seniors Society, and private donors.

Over the years, there has been a desire to have additional expansions and/or renovations, but the challenging building site and lack of adequate funding sources were barriers unable to be overcome.

Current Programs and Activities

The Kent Street Activity Centre is a bustling recreation centre focusing on 55+ programs and activities including special events, a coffee shop serving homemade cuisine and frozen meals as well as 17 diverse activity groups. These volunteer-led activity groups provide a broad range of dance, drama, music, arts & crafts, card games, technology, and active living opportunities for White Rock Seniors.

Older adults who participate in senior centre programs experience better psychological well being compared to non-participants. Senior Centre participants experience improved social and health benefits, lower levels of depression, supportive friendships, and lower stress levels. Research shows older adults who participate in seniors' programs can learn to manage and delay the onset of chronic disease and experience measurable improvements in their social, physical, emotional, spiritual, mental, and economic well-being.

The Kent Street Activity Centre offers many recreation and culture programs through the City's Recreation and Culture department with opportunities for participation in a wide variety of health and wellness classes. In addition, the Kent Street Activity Centre offers excursions on the City's 22 passenger bus that allow seniors to visit popular attractions and events without having to drive or take public transit.

Volunteers play a vital role in the success of the Kent Street Activity Centre activities, programs, and events. There are many volunteers helping out daily including the coffee shop, adult learning instruction, driving the mini-bus, or helping out at one of the many Kent Street Activity Centre

special events. In 2023, over 120 volunteers contributed 5,868 hours towards the operation of the centre.

The Kent Street Seniors Society is the fundraising arm of the Centre and is staffed entirely by volunteers. Special fundraising events include a book sale, indoor garage sales, plant sales, and fashion shows with all funds directed to the operations of the Kent Street Activity Centre.

Kent Street Needs Assessment Motion for Funding by Council

The Kent Street Centre Expansion Proposal Committee presented to Council on July 11, 2022. Kent Street Seniors Society members discussed the impact of COVID, the physical constraints of the current size of the Kent Street Activity Centre and the limitations this has on the delivery of seniors programs and services.

White Rock City Council was asked to co-fund and provide leadership to conduct a needs assessment that would examine the options for expansion at the Kent Street Activity Centre. It was moved and seconded that Council:

1. Approve a Needs Assessment Study for the Kent Street Activity Centre be conducted; and
2. Direct this study be completed under a cost-sharing formula with the Kent Street Seniors Society at an estimated cost of \$25,000.

The motion carried unanimously.

After a competitive bid process, RC Strategies Inc was selected as the successful proponent in August 2023 to conduct a needs assessment. RC Strategies is a Canadian consulting firm specializing in municipal recreation services with a wide range of experience conducting master plans, strategies, and feasibility studies for local governments across the country.

Kent Street Activity Centre Building Assessment

In August 2023, a Facilities Master Plan was completed by the Engineering and Municipal Operations Department. When evaluating Kent Street's overall condition of its major building systems, the report noted Kent Street Activity Centre's envelope, interior, mechanical, and electrical were all in poor condition with its plumbing and structural systems found to be in neutral condition.

The Facilities Master Plan stated that "the building needs major repairs as envelope failure reports are becoming more frequent in recent years". Total repairs are estimated at approximately \$620,000 with \$366,000 of these repairs listed as critical or important (including the roof that was recently upgraded). The Facilities Master Plan also states that "although accessibility and code upgrades are not required unless the facility is renovated, due to the highly public nature of the use and programs geared towards seniors, the City may want to consider voluntary accessibility and life safety upgrades."

RC Strategies Needs Assessment Methodology and Conclusion

The White Rock community was engaged through a survey, discussion sessions, and comment walls. The survey was conducted online with paper copies being available at all White Rock recreation facilities with a total of 228 responses received. A comment wall was placed at the Kent Street Activity Centre and the White Rock Community Centre and 11 separate discussion tables were held with community stakeholders.

In addition to analyzing the results of the community engagement, RC Strategies completed a jurisdictional scan of senior focused recreation centres in the Lower Mainland to examine current trends and best practices to identify options and recommendations for the City to meet the needs

of the Seniors at the Kent Street Activity Centre. The four potential future options identified by RC Strategies were:

- replace the Kent Street Activity Centre at the same site;
- undertake an extensive renovation;
- develop a stand-alone senior's facility at a different site; and
- develop the identified core spaces as part of an integrated 'hub' facility.

The core recommendation of the Needs Assessment is to develop the identified senior activity spaces as part of a new community 'hub' facility in White Rock. This would provide synergies with the general population to allow new Seniors to gradually participate into older adult programs and activities as well as be an efficient use of Civic facilities.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Kent Street Needs Assessment study is a high priority strategic goal of City Council and aligns with Council's:

Community Objective to "Encourage positive community gathering by designing and implementing inviting public spaces and beautification projects." One of its action items is to "Conduct the needs assessment to redesign Kent Street Activity Centre to benefit a growing 50+ population in partnership with the Kent Street Seniors Society."

Infrastructure Objective to "Ensure future infrastructure resiliency by making decisions through a long-term lens."

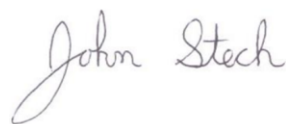
OPTIONS / RISKS / ALTERNATIVES

Council could choose not to direct staff to forward this report and the accompanying needs assessment to the Community Hub Steering Committee.

CONCLUSION

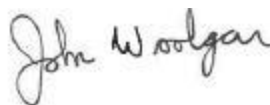
The Kent Street Activity Centre is a well-used and cherished community asset that has been serving the needs of White Rock Seniors for the past 50 years. However, the current facility is aging, requires significant re-investment and the size is inadequate to meet the needs of a large and growing Seniors population in White Rock. The core recommendation arising from the Kent Street Activity Centre Needs Assessment is to develop the identified senior activity spaces as part of a new community 'hub' facility in White Rock.

Respectfully submitted,



John Stech
Manager of Community Recreation

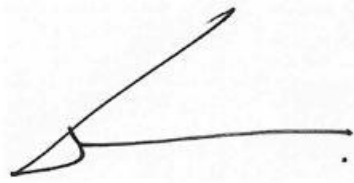
Approved by,



John Woolgar
Director of Recreation and Culture

Comments from the Chief Administrative Officer

I concur with the recommendation of this corporate report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of connected strokes that form a stylized, somewhat abstract shape.

Guillermo Ferrero
Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix A: Council Summary Presentation of the Kent Street Needs Assessment Study