

Staff Report



To	General Committee
Subject	South Barrie Mixed Use Recreation Complex and Library
Date	June 11, 2025
Ward	All
From	R. Pews P.Eng., Director of Corporate Facilities
Executive Member Approval	J. Schmidt, General Manager of Community and Corporate Services
CAO Approval	M. Prowse, Chief Administrative Officer
Staff Report #	FAC004-25

Recommendation(s):

1. That the location, program, facility and parks concepts identified as 'Scenario 2' for a single regional recreation centre and library to serve the Salem and Hewitt's growth areas, as described in Staff Report FAC004-25, be endorsed.
 2. That approved capital projects 'FC1085', 'FC1086', and forecasted project intakes '000613' and '000614' be consolidated into one project, 'FC1085', and named as 'South Barrie Mixed Use Recreation Complex and Library' as part of the 2026 Capital Plan.
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Executive Summary:

Staff are providing an update to the 2017 Hewitt's and Salem Mixed-Use Recreation Centre and Library Conceptualization Study. In 2017, City Staff engaged the services of architectural and planning consultants, Perkins&Will, to develop a conceptualization study for two new mixed-use recreation centres and library facilities located in the Salem and Hewitt's Secondary Plan areas in Barrie's south end. The purpose of this study was to develop conceptual programming, site test fits, and estimated costs for capital planning. In 2024, staff re-engaged Perkins&Will to update this 2017 study, and re-validate that the location, programming, sizing and costing aligns with changes in recreational and library trends.

City staff identified an alternative scenario to be investigated through the conceptualization study update, a single regional sized library and recreation centre. In an effort to explore efficiencies and innovation, City staff directed Perkins&Will to prepare a concept of a single regional sized library and recreation centre, as an alternative to the previously approved two facility model approach. The two scenarios investigated are detailed further in the conceptualization study included as 'Appendix A', and summarized

below.

Staff are recommending endorsement of ‘Scenario 2’, a single regional sized facility as an alternative to the two-facility model adopted through Motion 17-G-286. It was determined through the updated 2024 conceptualization study, that endorsing a single regional sized facility model has several benefits as further detailed in this Staff Report.

Key Findings:

Scope of Work

Perkins&Will facilitated several workshops with City staff and service partners to re-validate results from the 2017 study. Included in these workshops were representatives from Corporate Facilities, Recreation and Culture, Development Services and Barrie Public Library. Throughout these workshops, participants provided updated information regarding programming changes, space requirements for programming, service level targets, emerging trends and future projections of City needs of these spaces.

Scenario 1 – Two Facility Model

The Scenario 1 – Two facility model includes two community sized mixed-use recreation centres with libraries to serve the Salem and Hewitt’s Secondary Plans. It is further categorized as Scenario 1a – Salem, and Scenario 1b – Hewitt’s. The total gross floor area (GFA) of built space for Scenario 1 is 418,121 sf.

Scenario 1a – Salem

The proposed location for the Salem Recreation Centre and Library is on a 20 acre property located on the South side of McKay Road West, just East of Simcoe County Road 27. Although this location is suitable for updated programming, it may prove to be too small when programming is finalized through future design development.

The required programming of a Salem facility identified a GFA of 182,970 sf. A breakdown of the facility and site programming is further detailed in the conceptualization study included as ‘Appendix A’. Below is a high-level summary of included programming:

- Twin Pad Arena
- 6 lane 25m Pool
- Leisure & Therapy Pools
- Single Gymnasium
- Fitness Centre
- Multi-Purpose Rooms
- 25,000 sf Library
- Outdoor Recreation Space (Soccer, Pickleball, Tennis, Basketball, Skate Park, Splash Pad, Playground)

Scenario 1b – Hewitt’s

The Hewitt’s Secondary Plan location originally identified for the Hewitt’s Recreation Centre and Library is located on the west side of Yonge Street, north of Lockhart Road and is approximately 18 acres in size. This location is no longer considered viable due to increased site programming requirements.

The required programming of a Hewitt’s facility identified a GFA of 235,151 sf. A breakdown of the facility and site programming is further detailed in the conceptualization study included as ‘Appendix A’. Below is a high-level summary of included programming:

- Twin Pad Arena
- 8 lane 25m Pool
- Leisure & Therapy Pools
- Double Gymnasium
- Fitness Centre
- Multi-Purpose Rooms
- 15,000 sf Library
- Outdoor Recreation Space (Soccer, Cricket, Pickleball, Baseball, Tennis, Basketball, Skate Park, Splash Pad, Playground, Multi Use Domed Facility, Dog Park, Community Garden, Event Plaza, Walking Trails)

Scenario 2 – Single Facility Model

The Scenario 2 – Single facility model includes a regional sized mixed-use recreation centre and library at a centrally located site between the Hewitt’s and Salem growth areas.

The proposed location for the single regional sized facility is a 100 acre property in the vicinity of McKay Rd E and Huronia Rd. This site was strategically identified as a preferred location as it is centrally located between Hewitt’s and Salem growth areas, and is in close proximity to HWY 400 which will be made accessible by a future planned interchange project at HWY 400 and McKay Rd.

The required programming of a single regional sized facility identified a GFA of 370,537 sf. A breakdown of the facility and site programming is further detailed in the conceptualization study included as ‘Appendix A’. Below is a high-level summary of included programming:

- Quad Pad Arena
- 8 lane 25m Pool
- Leisure & Therapy Pools
- Triple Gymnasium
- Fitness Centre
- Multi-Purpose Rooms
- 45,000 sf Library

- Outdoor Recreation Space (Soccer, Cricket, Pickleball, Baseball, Tennis, Basketball, Skate Park, Splash Pad, Playground, Multi Use Domed facility, Dog Park, Community Garden, Event Plaza, Walking Trails)

Key Advantages of Scenario 2 – Single Facility Model

Endorsing Scenario 2 would establish a total capital cost avoidance of approximately \$80,000,000. Developing a concept for the single facility model allowed staff and Perkins&Will to find additional shared use of spaces between programmatic elements, and leverage economies of scale in building infrastructure. This resulted in a net decrease in GFA of 47,584 sf, and the optimization of outdoor recreation spaces. Further contributing to the reduction in capital investment is the elimination of a second property purchase. By consolidating all programming into one location, there will be no need to purchase additional land in the Salem growth area. The proposed budgets for Scenarios 1 and 2 are further detailed in the Financial Implications section below.

Endorsing Scenario 2 would establish significant operating cost avoidance. The single facility model will also eliminate significant costs related to the operation and maintenance of a second facility and site, as well as staffing that would be required for a second facility. Although the recommended Scenario 2 complex is a larger facility in terms of GFA compared to the individual facilities in Scenario 1, the single facility complex model will require less staffing than two independent recreation centres & library complexes.

Endorsing Scenario 2 would provide several environmental benefits and contribute positively to the City's sustainability objectives. A single, larger facility with a four-pad rink and pool is more energy efficient than two separate two-pad rink and pool facilities due to several key factors. By consolidating under one roof, the facility reduces the amount of exterior surface area, minimizing heat loss and improving insulation performance. Shared infrastructure—such as HVAC systems, mechanical rooms, and lighting—eliminates duplication and leads to lower overall energy use. Additionally, the integrated design allows for effective heat recovery; for example, waste heat from ice-making can be redirected to heat pool water or building air. Centralized systems also enable more efficient operation and maintenance, further contributing to energy savings and a smaller environmental footprint.

Endorsing Scenario 2 would create expanded opportunities to host regional sporting, recreational and cultural events. While the single facility will comfortably support the recreation and library needs of the Salem and Hewitt's growth areas, it also presents a unique opportunity to attract visitors throughout Barrie and neighbouring communities. The expanded size of programming for each of the library, recreation and parks components allow for regional tournaments and events to be held at the same location. A regional size facility acts as a flagship destination for events, enhancing local identity and attracting more visitors. While supporting a growing city population, it can also serve as a well-known landmark for major tournaments and gatherings, fostering a stronger sense of community and encouraging larger-scale participation.

Financial Implications:

Within the 2025 capital plan, the current approved and forecasted budget to deliver library and recreation programming in the Salem and Hewitt's growth areas, which is based on two independent facilities and programming developed in 2017 is **\$356.7M**, further detailed by funding source in Table 1 below. This figure is contained within approved capital projects 'FC1085', 'FC1086', and forecasted project intakes '000613' and '000614'.

Table 1
2025 Capital Plan for Library and Recreation Facilities

Construction	\$293,313,285
DC Parks and Recreation Reserve	\$255,351,884
DC Library Reserve	\$37,961,401
Land	\$63,400,000
DC Parks and Recreation Reserve	\$34,132,826
Cash-In-Lieu Parkland Reserve	\$29,267,174
Grand Total	\$356,713,285

Working on behalf of Perkins&Will, Turner & Townsend Cost Consultants were asked to provide updated hard and soft project costing of the Scenario 1 option, in addition to costing the recommended Scenario 2 option. The figures provided by Turner & Townsend have been refined to reflect programming updates, construction escalation and a 12% sustainability premium. These figures required additional inputs by City staff to arrive at a final proposed budget for each scenario. These additional inputs included land acquisition costs and historical project expenses related to planning and consulting, such as the efforts of Perkins&Will to date.

The fully informed budget required to deliver Scenario 1 is **\$455,803,285**. The fully informed budget required to deliver Scenario 2 is **\$375,803,285**.

Alternatives:

The following alternatives are available for consideration by General Committee:

Alternative #1 – General Committee could choose to endorse 'Scenario 1' – Two facility model. This alternative is not recommended as it is not the most financially responsible option available. This model will expose the City to additional land purchase costs, capital investment costs, operating costs, and future maintenance costs.

Alternative #2 – General Committee could choose to endorse 'Scenario 1a) - Salem facility' or 'Scenario 1b) - Hewitt's facility' and construct on the 100 acre property in which Scenario 2 is proposed. Although this alternative is available, due to the level of growth that the City is expected to occur in South Barrie, the facility proposed in 'Scenario 1a) - Salem' or 'Scenario 1b) - Hewitt's' would not be able to provide for the level of service necessary and hence Scenario 2 is being recommended.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

Affordable Place to Live		
Community Safety		
Thriving Community	X	The recommended motions support expanded access to parks and recreation opportunities.
Infrastructure Investments		
Responsible Governance	X	The recommended motions promote financial stewardship which includes finding efficiencies and innovation.

Additional Background Information and Analysis:

Not Applicable

Consultation and Engagement:

During the 2017 conceptualization study, discussions and consultation sessions with community groups were held to identify current recreation and library needs, shortcomings, and successes. Comments from these community groups, clubs, and sports teams were considered and integrated when developing the conceptual facility programs and sizing. These comments were carried into the 2024/2025 update to the conceptualization study. It is intended that when future planning and design phases are completed, a committee/working group comprising local ward councillors and community groups be formed and consulted. Public information sessions will be scheduled as part of a future design phase.

Environmental and Climate Change Impact Matters:

The following environmental and/or climate change impact matters have been considered in the development of the recommendation.

Both Scenario 1 and 2 have been conceptually designed and costed to meet Net Zero Energy standards. An estimated premium of 12% is carried and will be further evaluated in design development phases through a cost benefit analysis before being implemented.

Appendix:

Appendix A – Hewitt’s and Salem Mixed-Use Recreation Centre and Library Conceptualization Study Update (2025)

Appendix B – Hewitt’s and Salem Mixed-Use Recreation Centre and Library Conceptualization Study (2017)

Report Author:

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File #:

Not Applicable

Pending #:

Not Applicable