

October 29, 2018

YMCA to operate Northside Community Centre

The City of Red Deer has entered into an agreement with the YMCA of Northern Alberta that will see the YMCA operate the Northside Community Centre.

1. Who is the YMCA of Northern YMCA?

With over 2,000 volunteers and staff working together across Northern Alberta who believe in helping children and families reach their full potential, the YMCA of Northern Alberta is a charity dedicated to strengthening the foundations of community.

For over 111 years they have cared for kids, shaped leaders for tomorrow and helped generations of people come together to find support, get healthier and make friends for life. Their mission is to create life-enhancing opportunities for the growth and development of all people in spirit, mind and body.

As one of 47 Member Association across Canada, the YMCA of Northern Alberta currently provides programs and services in Edmonton, Grande Prairie and Wood Buffalo.

2. What type or programs and services will be offered at the Northside Community Centre?

Programming will be determined by the YMCA, but the Northside Community Centre features multi-purpose space that can act as both gymnasium and special event gathering areas, culture programming space, flexible office/meeting rooms, fitness studio, and kitchen teaching space, interactive technology and play space, and a youth drop in area.

The YMCA will operate the facility seven days a week, including holidays. The programs and services that will be offered assume that:

- The Centre will be a gathering place for community
- The facility will host a mix of local residents, residents from other areas of the city and user groups
- The schedule will be responsive to needs and evolve over time
- The Centre will serve individuals, families, agencies and rental groups
- Programming will serve the unique needs of the surrounding communities
- In order to offer a broad range of programming options without diminishing attendance at other City facilities, programming will be complementary especially with the GH Dawe Community Centre given its close proximity
- Programming will serve and be welcoming to every person - all ages, backgrounds, and circumstance.

3. Why was the YMCA selected to operate the Northside Community Centre?

The Northside Community Centre was originally envisioned to be a City-operated facility, but the YMCA approached The City in the spring and expressed interest in establishing a presence in the community through the possible operation of the Northside Community Centre. Over the summer, Administration explored this operating model, which led to the negotiation of the agreement.

The City of Red Deer and the YMCA of Northern Alberta are strongly aligned through their focus on healthy, vibrant, inclusive communities where children, adults and families can thrive. The YMCA works with children, youth, adult and families at all ages and stages of their lives, to help them develop and achieve their potential. As a result, they increase their overall health and wellness, develop leadership abilities, and increase their motivation and resilience. Their participation in the YMCA contributes to an increased sense of connection and belonging to each other, to their YMCA community and ultimately to their local and global community.

4. How will this benefit the community?

In addition to the strong alignment between the YMCA and The City of Red Deer when it comes to building healthy, vibrant, inclusive communities for children, adults and families, the YMCA's proposed services and programs for the Northside Community Centre directly align with the Recreation Parks and Culture department mandate. They also meet six of the 10 [Social Policy Framework Community Goals](#).

As a well-known and established organization, the YMCA also brings extensive experience in housing, poverty prevention and reduction, employment services, and child care, that has the potential to extend beyond the Northside Community Centre.

Further, the YMCA's service delivery model is built on a foundation of fostering social change. With intentional program design to address community needs and risks, the YMCA is able to respond with a broad spectrum of opportunities to deliver social outcomes.

5. When will the Northside Community Centre open?

Construction is underway and we expect the facility to open by July 1.

6. Was YMCA the only organization considered for the operation of the Northside Community Centre?

Yes. Throughout planning for the Northside Community Centre (dating back to 2009), there have been conversations with the community to gauge interest and capacity for operations of the entire facility. Although community groups were interested in renting or leasing space within the facility, the capacity of local community groups to create a partnership for the active management of the entire facility was not apparent.

The YMCA of Northern Alberta has experience in operating two community centres (of almost the exact same size) through an Operating Lease in both Fort McMurray and Edmonton.

7. What will the fees be? Will residents be able to use City of Red Deer passes to access the facility?

We are still negotiating the terms of the contract, but we expect the Northside Community Centre will operate as a standalone facility. However, we anticipate there will be service consistency and equitable value for money when their fee structure is established.

8. Will this result in any job loss for City of Red Deer employees?

The Northside Community Centre is a new building and is not yet operational; therefore this will not result in job loss.

YMCA will be responsible for hiring all staff to manage and operate the facility.

9. Will there be space available for community use in the facility?

Yes, the facility will be available for community rentals, similar to other City of Red Deer recreation facilities.

10. The YMCA used to be in Red Deer but was ultimately not successful; what has changed?

The YMCA had a presence in Red Deer for over 30 years. Originally started in Red Deer in the early 1960s, the organization faced financial difficulties in the 1980s and had to close its doors in the 1990s.

Today, the YMCA of Northern Alberta is very different; today it is a much larger and more stable organization, with experience serving multiple cities and communities, including Edmonton, Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie. The organization shares internal services such as human resources, marketing, procurement, etc., which support a well-run, streamlined organization.

11. Will this model provide cost saving for taxpayers?

The two proposed business models (City-run and YMCA-run) are similar in terms of operating hours, and also revenues and expenses.

The cost savings with the YMCA's business model can be recognized in:

- The strength and depth of the staffing structure being suggested by the YMCA
- The use of volunteers to augment programs and services
- The value added opportunities that the Y will bring not only to that facility but in terms of the expertise they bring in many other services and programs including youth leadership development, volunteerism, housing, poverty reduction
- 111 years of experience building strong kids, families and communities.

12. What happens to the new facility if the YMCA is not a successful operator?

Regardless of the operator, The City maintains ownership of the building. Mitigation strategies are built into the contract to help ensure the operator is successful, but in the event they are not, The City would assume operation of the facility.