

Cultural Hub at Tom Davies Square and Junction East Update

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Report Summary

This report builds upon the information provided to Council in the Library and Art Gallery Project Update presentation on July 11, 2023. This report provides additional information regarding the Cultural Hub at Tom Davies Square as the location for a new Art Gallery of Sudbury, Sudbury Multicultural and Folk Arts Association and the new Central Branch of the Greater Sudbury Public Library.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Community Energy & Emissions Plan (CEEP)

This report addresses Strategic Objective 2.0 – Economic Capacity and Investment Readiness, from the City of Greater Sudbury Strategic Plan 2019-2027 (Revised July 2023). The Cultural Hub at Tome Davies Square will address the sustainability goals of the CGS Community Energy and Emissions Plan.

Financial Implications

Ongoing project design and development work continues to be funded by the Junction Capital Budget.

Background

On February 21, 2023, through Council Resolution CC2023-47, staff were directed to stop work on the Junction East project in its then current configuration and to develop alternative approaches that could meet the needs of the project partners and achieve the project's goals, at a lower cost.

Staff returned to Council on July 11, 2023 with an update presentation that described the analysis completed to that point and indicated the following:

- Tom Davies Square is the best alternative option for a downtown cultural hub, based on Council direction in February 2023
- Subject to confirmation through additional due diligence, the Greater Sudbury Cultural Hub at TDS project's capital budget represents significant savings over new construction at Junction East.

The Cultural Hub at Tom Davies Square (TDS) offers a unique and inspiring combination of municipal, library, multicultural, and art gallery program and service delivery. The facility renovation maintains the positive benefits of co-location and supports the project goals.

Since July, staff have continued to pursue and understand the feasibility of the Cultural Hub at TDS. Work continues on:

- Developing a design for the partners' program spaces that will fit within the existing space at TDS and will allow GSPL, AGS and SMFAA to provide services in an efficient and effective manner.
- Developing an order of magnitude cost estimate for the project.
- Accounting for the structural implications of library and art gallery use of the facility
- Initiating a review of the current use of TDS for municipal services and determining how these services could continue to be delivered in a shared facility by accessing additional space within the tower at 199 Larch.
- Ensuring that the City's new One-Stop Shop will remain operational in its current location.

To prepare for municipal relocation and office consolidation, staff have initiated a Municipal Relocation Master Plan, beginning with a review of municipal services and space requirements in a post-COVID context.

Cultural Hub Design Process and Managed Issues

Staff continue to work with project partners to understand how their functional program can be accommodated at Tom Davies Square. Fitting these uses within the existing exterior walls of the facility, and ensuring that the initial design works for staff and visitors, and respecting the structural constraints of the building is challenging and time-consuming. This is a comprehensive process for the partners and the project design team. For the partners this involves rethinking their operations to picture how the form and limitations of the existing facility can be leveraged and overcome. For the project design team this involves a very detailed understanding of the existing facility, its structure and elemental systems, and ways to adapt to limitations.

As discussed with Council in July, the Ontario Building Code requires higher floor loading capacities for libraries and art galleries than for general office space. An analysis of the floor load capacities of Tom Davies Square has been completed, which indicates higher load capacities on the ground floor and other localized areas. The project team is working with the partners to understand their intended functional program layouts, while concurrently identifying the potential for structural and architectural constraints and potential mitigation measures.

A more in-depth review of the types of use proposed for the library and art gallery components of the Cultural Hub has also been completed. This will help to inform the design for the future facility in order to match higher load capacity with higher programming load.

Once a design concept is completed, staff will work with CGS Building Services to seek approval of a code compliance alternative, where specific uses are approved based on the structural capacity analysis of the facility. This process is expected to begin in October and take approximately eight weeks to complete. This will result in a confirmation that the Cultural Hub at Tom Davies Square is a viable solution that is safe for program occupancy.

When renovating, modernizing or renewing an existing facility, there is an increased opportunity to encounter unknown conditions during construction, including the requirement for designated substance abatements. City staff is aware of issues that require repair within the facility, however, it is possible that

additional issues will be encountered during construction or that construction may also trigger the need to upgrade systems or other building components. The project budget will carry contingency amounts to address these issues should they arise.

The configuration of the Cultural Hub at TDS is quite different from Junction East and there is a need to better understand the demand for parking within and around the facility. Staff have agreed to work with GSPL to study the future needs of library patrons and develop an appropriate solution that will consider influences of transit availability and sustainable forms of transportation. The results of this work, as well as a review of expected demand for the AGS and SMFAA, will inform a parking plan for the Cultural Hub when it becomes operational.

The time required in order to complete this project is currently estimated at 30-36 months. Staff will seek every opportunity to shorten the time required by running phases in parallel and by using the delegated authorities from Council to make prudent and effective procurement decisions. For example, plan to negotiate a single source contract for the architectural services required to develop a detailed project design and construction drawings, so this work is ready to proceed immediately following approval of Code Compliance Alternative

Partner Participation

The Greater Sudbury Public Library, the Art Gallery of Sudbury and the Sudbury Multicultural Folk Arts Association have responded in a spirit of collaboration to Council's direction to pivot to a new direction for this project. The partners are working hard to understand how to ensure the Cultural Hub at TDS will work best for them and all partners continue to support an approach that moves the retrofit scenario to the next phase of understanding.

Approach to Costing

The costs for the Cultural Hub at Tom Davies Square project will include all construction, furniture, fixtures and equipment, contingencies, escalation, and professional fees for the new library, gallery and multicultural spaces. In addition, similar categories of costs will be included for the Municipal Services Relocation Project that is required to make space for the cultural hub. The MSR Project will also include a budget for the actual moving of furniture and equipment, as well as the estimated costs to rapidly digitize existing paper files so as to save the space and weight capacity required for filing cabinets in the reconfigured offices.

While there is not enough information on the design and configuration available at this point to provide a full cost estimate, the project team remains confident that, barring a prohibitive technical issue, the cost for this approach will be lower than the proposed Junction East new-build scenarios.

Once the partners confirm their comfort with the functional program layouts and the code compliance alternative process is initiated, staff will work with the architect to develop a Class D cost estimate (+/-20%) that will be shared with Council.

Other Considerations

Funding Opportunities:

The Large Projects Team has maintained lines of communication with funding agencies at the provincial and federal levels. Representatives of these agencies have been kept up to date with the work that is happening, and the City's interest in providing revised applications based on the details of the Cultural Hub at TDS. Mayor Lefebvre has also provided updates to Ministers and local representatives as appropriate.

As additional information becomes available, staff will work to adjust applications and answer questions so as to reduce the time required for a confirmation of eligibility and funding support.

The approach to renovating and repurposing TDS may offer additional funding opportunities, particularly through the FCM Green Fund. This will be fully explored over the next few months.

Operating Budget/Revenue/Contributions:

As TDS is already an operational facility, the Cultural Hub at TDS project offers the potential to ease the operating budget pressures that the City would have realized with a newly built Junction East facility. Some changes in operating budgets will still occur with the proposed option. These will be determined based on the detailed design, as well as the results of the Municipal Services Relocation Project. More detailed projections for these changes will be reported to Council as soon as they are available, likely in Q1 2024.

Facility operating agreements to describe the ongoing relationships between the partners and the CGS, will differ slightly from those anticipated for the Junction East new build facility. The GSPL already occupies space within municipal facilities and an overall operating agreement is already in development. It is expected that this agreement will also cover the library space within the proposed Cultural Hub and any financial considerations will be addressed through the regular budgetary process. A long-term agreement with SMFAA is also close to finalization.

As the space requirements for the AGS continue to develop, staff will work with them to review potential terms for a future operating agreement and outline these details for Council in future reports. Staff will also clarify the capital contribution commitments made by partners so these can be accurately accounted for in future project budget reporting.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Staff will continue to develop and flesh out the details of the Cultural Hub at TDS as the best option pursuant to Council's direction on February 21, 2023. In order to shorten the time required to fully implement the project, every effort will be made to run processes concurrently and, where appropriate, utilize staff's delegated authority to make reasonable and necessary decisions regarding procurement of expertise.

Staff expects to return to Council on December 5, 2023 with a detailed update report, including draft conceptual designs and a projected budget for both the Cultural Hub at Tom Davies Square, and the Municipal Services Relocation projects. This report will include recommendations for Council's consideration that will provide direction to move forward with this option and close out the previously proposed work.

The next steps for staff will involve the following:

1. Continue to work with partners to finalize conceptual design and space allocations that will work for all parties.
2. Finalize structural analysis to validate assumptions made in conceptual design.
3. Work with CGS Building Services to initiate an analysis and review leading to a potential Code Compliance Alternative.
4. Work with the architect to finalize a Class D cost estimate, based on the design, structural analysis and associated recommendations.
5. Negotiate a single source contract for architectural services required to develop a detailed design, construction drawings and construction administration, following approval of Code Compliance Alternative.

6. Position all obligations and contracts, associated with the previous Junction East proposal, for rapid wind down based on Council direction.
7. Provide a progress report with recommended directions to Council on December 5, 2023.

Resources Cited

1. Library / Art Gallery / Multicultural Initiative Update (Junction East), Presentation to City Council, July 11, 2023. <https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=50117>
2. February 21, 2023. Motion to Suspend Work on Junction East Cultural Hub. <https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=fa0c24e0-d25f-451a-8ffa-2fec27825c2a&Agenda=PostMinutes&lang=English>