

THE MUNICIPALITY OF LAMBTON SHORES

Report CAO 02-2025

Council Meeting Date: February 25, 2025

TO: Mayor Cook and Members of Council

FROM: Steve McAuley, CAO

RE: Grand Bend Community Centre Design Survey Results

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report CAO 02-2025 regarding the “Proposed Grand Bend Community Centre Design Survey Results” be received for information.

SUMMARY

This report provides Council with an overview of survey results that were received from an online survey regarding the proposed design for a community centre in Grand Bend.

BACKGROUND

At the December 17, 2024 meeting, Council passed the following resolution:

THAT Report CAO 12-2024 regarding the “Grand Bend Community Centre Update” be received; and

THAT staff be directed to initiate online public engagement for the proposed facility design.

An online survey was published on December 23 and included the following questions:

1. After reviewing the conceptual designs and proposed facility features, how satisfied are you with the proposed community center? (Scale, 1-9)
2. After reviewing the conceptual designs and facility features, how would you use this proposed facility? (open question)
3. What do you like most about the proposed facility? (open question)
4. Is there anything you would change about the proposed facility? (open question)
5. Do you have any general comments you would like to share about the proposed facility and conceptual designs? (open question)

6. Where do you live (select one from list: Lambton Shores, Bluewater, North Middlesex, South Huron or other).
7. Please provide your postal code (e.g., N0M 1T0)

The survey closed on January 31 and received a total of 707 responses. A copy of the survey summary and common themes associated with the responses is attached to this report. Also attached to this report are all comments received through the survey.

The intent of the survey was to obtain feedback on the proposed facility design. As indicated in the attached comments, there are several common themes not necessarily related to the proposed design. These include:

1. General lack of support for the project.
2. General dissatisfaction with the proposed location, particularly centered around the decommissioning of the existing baseball diamond to accommodate the proposed facility.

Comments that did relate to the design of the facility included:

3. There were 193 comments that were generally in support of the facility design.
4. Some respondents expressed dissatisfaction with amenities, with a focus on desire for a pool (169 comments) and/or ice rink (49 comments) to be added. Some respondents also felt that there was a lack of amenities for families (53 comments) and respondents also expressed the desire for art centre space (33 comments).

Council should use caution when interpreting these results. For example, the general lack of support for the project that was expressed in the survey was certainly not what was expressed by the public that participated in the feasibility study. Approximately 220 members of the public participated in the open houses that were held, with the majority expressing support for the project as documented in the following assessment from the feasibility study:

“Support for a Community Centre: People attending the open house overwhelmingly expressed support for a municipally-owned and operated community centre to be provided in Grand Bend”;

In addition, of the almost 800 respondents to the feedback online form, 78% agreed to the question stating *“A community centre should be a high priority”*

In terms of the disappointment expressed in the survey because of the lack of certain amenities such as an indoor pool or ice rink, these items were discussed in the feasibility study and the final recommendation for the community centre did not include them, as such they were simply not contemplated in the design that was prepared.

Although the location of the facility was not specifically part of the feasibility study, it was expressed by many of the public participants that the baseball diamond was the preferred location for the community centre based on walkability, access to other amenities, etc. Staff was clear at the start of the design stage that while it was understood where the preferred location was, until a final building footprint was established, staff could not commit to a location. Through the design process it was determined that the facility, including the required parking, could be accommodated on the ball diamond and as such a site plan was prepared. Staff continue to have the opinion that this site is a good location that has many positives associated with it. It should be noted that the existing diamond is a sub-standard size and is not suitable for adult play. In addition, there are currently no organized baseball associations in Grand Bend using the diamond.

As noted in previous discussions of online surveys conducted by the Municipality, staff caution that results from open online surveys are not considered statistically significant. While this survey received many responses, it may not accurately represent overall community opinion. Surveys that are conducted like this survey tend to solicit responses from those that are either strongly in support of an issue or strongly opposed. Municipalities typically do not conduct statistically significant surveys on a regular basis due to the cost associated with these types of surveys, however staff can investigate alternative ways for obtaining public opinion that may be used in the future.

ALTERNATIVES TO CONSIDER

There are no alternatives provided as this report is being presented only for information. Until such time as the status of the funding request that was submitted for this project is confirmed, staff is not recommending any additional actions.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The recommendation is to receive the report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no direct financial impact associated with receiving this report.

CONSULTATION

Ashley Farr, Director of Community Services
Alex Boughen, Licensing and Communications Coordinator

Attached:

- 1) Survey summary and themes
- 2) Survey comments