



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

The 519 Sport and Recreation Project

Date:	November 20, 2013
To:	Community Development and Recreation Committee
From:	Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration Executive Director, The 519 Community Centre
Wards:	Ward 27
Reference Number:	AFS # 18368

SUMMARY

The 519 Church Street Community Centre (The 519), with the support of a major philanthropic donor, is proposing to build the first ever LGBTQ-focused sports and recreation centre in Toronto. This landmark recreation facility will establish an international best practice for LGBTQ engagement in recreation and offer a range of spaces for community activities and athletic programming. The proposed facility will also meet a service requirement for the West Don Lands community. The facility will be developed and governed by The 519 Community Centre, in keeping with their dual mandate of responding to the needs of the local community and communities of common bond. As with other AOCC (Association of Community Centres) facilities, as part of The 519, this facility will be managed in accordance with the City of Toronto's Relationship Framework for AOCCs.

It is proposed that the centre will be built on the Wheel and Foundry complex site located at Eastern Avenue and St. Lawrence Street, adjacent to Corktown Commons. The site is currently owned by Infrastructure Ontario. The area is under construction as it will host the Athletes Village for the 2015 Pan American / Parapan American Games.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director of Social Development, Finance and Administration and the Executive Director of The 519 recommend that:

1. The Executive Director of Social Development, Finance and Administration work with the donor, The 519 Centre, Waterfront Toronto, Real Estate Services, and City Planning to develop an overall project proposal.
2. Staff be authorized to enter into negotiations with Infrastructure Ontario to acquire the project site, and report back to Council with respect to the results of those negotiations.
3. The Executive Director of Social Development, Finance and Administration be directed to establish a working group with The 519, City Legal, Real Estate Services, and City Planning (Waterfront Secretariat and Community Planning) to develop the parameters for an interim Development Board to manage The 519 Athletic Centre project.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts as a result of approval of this report. The Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration will report back to Council with the results of land acquisition negotiations. The report will include the project funding sources, the capital costs to develop The 519 Sport and Recreation Centre, as well as the estimated annual operating and administrative costs for the building.

The proposed financing structure is a combination of private donations and public funds. Given the proposed size and scope of the project, it is anticipated that the capital costs will be approximately \$100 million. The project will secure 66% of the capital funding through private donations, foundations, and corporate contributions and the remaining 34% will be covered through municipal, provincial and federal government investment.

The 519 has secured support from a private donor for a significant portion of the capital costs and the donor is working with The 519 on an extensive capital campaign to raise the remaining funds. The donor has committed to support the 519 Sport and Recreation Centre project by providing one third of the total cost of the project. This donation will be contingent on securing an additional one third of the cost of the project from private donors and a combined one third from all three levels of government.

The 519 Athletic Centre is anticipated to become operational in 2017. At that time, the City may begin to cover operating costs. As in all AOCC funding arrangements, the core administration activities would be funded by the City and the program components are funded through fees, donations and grants.

Equity Impact

Currently, there are no dedicated spaces for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgendered, Queer (LBGTQ) people to participate in sport and recreation. The issues of homophobia and transphobia in organized sports are well documented. Given the demand for

affordable sports and recreation facilities within the city of Toronto, The 519 Athletic Centre will provide safe, accessible, dedicated LGBTQ recreation space.

The 519 is committed to meeting the health, social and athletic needs of the LGBTQ community.

Decision History

On September 25, 2006, City Council adopted The City of Toronto's Relationship Framework. This framework governs the City's relationships with the Association of Community Centres (AOCCs). There are ten multi-purpose Board-run facilities providing a broad range of community, recreation, and social service programs to residents in local communities. The community centres and their Boards were established through community plans and community decision-making processes that recommended to Council the community centre Board model as the most appropriate model to meet the needs of the local community.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/minutes/council/cc060925.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In May 2012, representatives from The 519 met with a private donor to explore the development of a LGBTQ focussed recreation space. Currently, there are over 40 LGBTQ sports leagues and organizations with over 6,000 members. League space is insufficient and there are no dedicated LGBT spaces for sport and recreation. The issues of homophobia and transphobia in organized sports are well documented.

The proposed site for The 519 Athletic Centre is the Wheel and Foundry complex located in the West Don Lands community. The Athletes Village being constructed there for the 2015 Pan American / Parapan American Games will create housing for 11,000 new residents. This development is driving a need for greater recreation and community space. The 519 Athletic Centre will leverage resources from a unique public sector-private foundation investment to contribute to meeting this community facility need.

COMMENTS

The Need for Community Infrastructure

The Recreation Service Plan 2013-2017 aims to increase overall participation in recreation, decrease financial barriers to recreation, and improve local and geographic access, amidst Toronto's aging recreation infrastructure. By the end of 2013, Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR) facilities will have an accumulated maintenance and repair backlog of over \$300 million. There is a clear need to develop multi-use community centres that can better adapt to changing community. The proposed plan for The 519 Athletic Centre will meet the evolving social and athletic needs of the LGBTQ and the West Don Lands communities.

Following the 2015 Pan American / Parapan American Games, there will be an estimated 6,000 units of housing available for occupancy, attracting approximately 11,000 new residents into this downtown neighbourhood. The Recreation Service Plan identifies the downtown core as one area of Toronto that shows strong population growth and will require additional recreation service planning and delivery considerations. Parks, Forestry and Recreation is interested in exploring possible programming options for the Athletic Centre when appropriate.

The 519's sport and recreation programming has grown over the past 5 years and is now fully integrated in the Centre's current strategic plan. In 2012, The 519 was selected to trustee the PrideHouseTO initiative for TO2015. The initiative is a collaboration of 15 organizations working with TO2015 to engage LGBTQ communities in the Games. The initiative is intended to create spaces that celebrate inclusivity and diversity and is a direct contrast to Russia's decision to ban Pride House in the 2014 Olympic Games in Sochi.

The PrideHouseTO initiative has been recommended for funding in 2014 and 2015 under the City's Host City Showcase Program. It is expected that the PrideHouseTO initiative will attract thousands of visitors. As World Pride and PrideHouseTO work to brand Toronto as a global destination for LGBTQ tourism and investment, the new athletic centre will build on this work and provide opportunities to host international tournaments and multi-sport games for LGBTQ athletes in future years.

Site and Surrounding Area

The 32 hectare (80 acre) site of the West Don Lands is being transformed from former industrial lands into a sustainable, mixed-use community. The site is largely owned by the Provincial government. The revitalized area will feature new residential units, employment and commercial spaces, and required community facilities and services including a school, child care centres, and 9.3 hectares (23 acres) of parks and public spaces.

Development of the community has been accelerated because a portion of the site is being developed for use as the Athletes' Village for the Toronto 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games. The Athletes' Village project includes the construction of a new 82,000 square-foot YMCA recreational facility, George Brown College's first ever student residence, two affordable housing residential buildings and two market residential development sites, as well as the surrounding infrastructure and roads. These facilities will be built prior to the 2015 Games and used as the Athletes' Village. Given the proposed focus of the Centre, The 519 Athletic Centre will work closely with the YMCA to ensure complimentary programming and services to effectively service the local community and the broader LGBTQ communities.

Currently, Infrastructure Ontario (IO) owns and controls the Heritage site proposed as the location for the Athletic Centre. City ownership of the land is critical to the success of the project in order to provide the project donors with certainty of the City's commitment and

ability to protect this new community infrastructure for LGBTQ access and use over time.

To date, members of the project team have met with the Minister, Infrastructure Ontario and attended two meetings with IO staff and Waterfront Toronto to discuss the merits of the project and how it fits with the Waterfront precinct plan. At this stage, IO has expressed interest in continuing to have discussions about the long-term use of the site. With Council agreement, City staff will advance these discussions further. It is expected that the process of further negotiations may take a number of months and staff will report back to Council in the first quarter of 2014, including all potential financial implications for the City.

Proposed Governance Model

In order to develop The 519 Athletic Centre project through the pre-construction, construction and initial operating phases, an interim development board will be established to facilitate the pre-development and construction process, as well as to manage the capital campaign fundraising plan and project funds. The interim board will have representation from The 519, the City, Waterfront Toronto and other relevant project partners. The board will be responsible to complete the project to the specifications of The 519, the City and Waterfront Toronto, and at the end of the construction process turn the facility over to The 519 (City) to operate. Similar to the current building that The 519 has delegated authority to manage under the Relationship Framework, the City of Toronto will own the facility and The 519 will operate the new athletic centre as an extension of its current mandate.

Pre-Development Phase: The Development Board will assume the responsibilities for all aspects of the pre-development phases of the project (i.e., business planning, design, raising capital/fundraising).

Construction Phase: As the project shifts from pre-development to construction, the expectation is that Infrastructure Ontario will transfer ownership of the site to the City. During the construction phase, the Development Board will retain responsibility for the building and land in order to facilitate the flow of the capital development process including fundraising, corporate investment, all liability and to ensure the appropriate oversight during the capital construction phase.

Operating Phase: Post-construction, responsibility for the building and the land will be transferred to the City of Toronto. As a City of Toronto facility, it will be operated by The 519 Community Centre, as an extension of its current mandate, and as regulated under the City's Relationship Framework for AOCCs.

Currently the site is being used for staging during the 2015 PanAm/Parapan Games. It is expected, subject to final Council approval, that over the next two years the interim development board would work in partnership with the City and Waterfront Toronto to advance the project through the pre-construction phase and seek the requisite approvals, building and site designs drawings, permits, release construction tender documents etc.

Construction would commence at the end of 2015. It is expected that the project will take up to two years to build and would be opened in time for the Sesquicentennial Canada Celebrations.

Project Financing

The proposed financing structure is a combination of private donations and public funds. Given the proposed size and scope of the project, it is anticipated that the capital costs will be approximately \$100 million. The project will secure 66% of the capital funding through private donations, foundations, and corporate contributions and the remaining 34% will be covered through municipal, provincial and federal government investment.

The 519 has secured support from a private donor for a significant portion of the capital costs and the donor is working with The 519 on an extensive capital campaign to raise the remaining funds. The donor has committed to support the 519 Athletic Centre project by providing one third of the total cost of the project. This donation will be contingent on securing an additional one third of the cost of the project from private donors and a combined one third from all three levels of government. The donor has requested anonymity at this time.

The Executive Director of Social Development, Finance and Administration and the Executive Director of The 519 will report back to Council with the results of the land negotiations and the business case for the financing of the initiative including the project funding sources, the capital costs to develop The 519 Athletic Centre, as well as the annual operating and administrative costs for the building.

CONTACT

Leah Ross
Project Manager, Community Revitalization
Tel. No. 416-397-4494
E-mail: lross2@toronto.ca

Maura Lawless
Executive Director
Tel. No. 416-355-6771
E-mail: mlawless@the519.org

SIGNATURES

Chris Brillinger
Executive Director
Social Development, Finance and
Administration

Maura Lawless
Executive Director
The 519 Community Centre